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FOLKLORE IN BILL ARP'S WORKS

by

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Charles H. Smith, who wrote under the pseudonym of Bill Arp, is remembered chiefly because of his humorous comments upon Civil War and Reconstruction times in Georgia, but his work is also noteworthy as a repository of southern folklore. His letters, beginning in the 1860's and continuing into the first decade of the twentieth century, were published in *The Atlanta Constitution* and were copied in many small papers of Georgia and surrounding states. So popular did they become that they were collected in book form and in this way also had a wide circulation among southerners. They were of interest when they appeared because they reflected the attitudes and prejudices of the average reader and at the same time enabled him to laugh at his own foibles and hardships. They are of value today not only in revealing these attitudes and prejudices but also in showing beliefs and folkways current in the South during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Since McIlwaine has brought to contemporary attention Arp's descriptions of the gander pulling and other Cracker activities,¹ this article will concern itself with his use of a more general area of folklore which derived from the Negro as well as from the Cracker.

Although he was by no means a conscious folklorist, he enlivened his sketches with superstitions, tales, folk games and rhymes, as well as descriptions of many local customs. He had excellent opportunities of becoming acquainted with folklore from various sources, one of which is indicated in the following reminiscence:

When I was a boy, we could tell the difference in the negro character by the stories they told in their cabins at night, and good negroes always told us funny, cheer-

¹ Shields McIlwaine, *The Southern Poor White from Lubberland to Tobacco Road*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1939, pp. 63-67.

ful stories about the tar baby, and the bear and the bee tree, and about foxes and wolves, but the bad negroes told us about witches and ghosts and Jack-o' lanterns, and raw-head and bloody-bones.²

He also learned much from the cotton wagoners with whom he made long trips to Augusta every year. Of those journeys he said:

When I wer a fryin size chicken the biggest thing out was a trip to Augusty. The way to go was along an old fashend dirt road, with your daddy's coten wagen—two round bales in the bed and six more on the top—campin out of nites, cookin your own vittles and settin around the camp-fire retailin old wagoners lies. Lies about injuns and bars and katamounts—lies about snakes that was jinted and cum to peeses when you struck em, and then crawled together agin—snakes that had a pisen horn in the head and rolled after you like a hoop, and if you got behind a tree they struck the tree with their horn and got fast, and the tree would die in fifteen minutes³—lies about ghosts and Jack-o-lanterns and robbers with caves full of money—lies about vampires and skreech owls, and raw head and bloody bones, and about doktors diggin up all the corpses that was burred and bilen em down for medesine, and the spanyards bilin the ded niggers down into molasses.⁴

Throughout the columnist's works, certain of these old tales are referred to again and again, notably that of Raw Head and Bloody Bones, which had made an indelible impression upon him. Bill Arp, however, never told the version of the tale that he had heard of this ghastly character, possibly because he considered it too harrowing for his readers' sensibilities; but he did tell about Uncle Sam, the cunjur doctor's boasting that he had shaken hands with the terrible Raw Head and Bloody Bones.⁵

He was struck with the Negro's delight in mixing the marvelous with the horrible, and he recorded that this same Uncle Sam had in his cunjur bag, "every curious bug that he could find. Betty bugs and June bugs and tumble bugs, and the devil's riding horse, and the devil's darning needle and a green snake, and a thousandleg, and a lot of herbs, such as hemlock and juniper weed and snake root." "He

² Charles H. Smith, *The Farm and the Fireside*, Atlanta, 1891, p. 148.

³ For a similar account, see James R. Masterson, "Travelers' Tales of Colonial History," *JAFL*, Lix, 181-182.

⁴ Charles H. Smith, *Peace Papers*, New York, 1884, pp. 249-250.

⁵ *The Farm and the Fireside*, p. 314.

assured me," Arp continued, "that he had to use all these things in the very bad cases he came across in his extensive practice."⁶ Another old Negro was quoted as saying that the devil's race horse, by which name the praying mantis is still known in the rural South, was a very dangerous creature that "chaws tobakker like a gentleman and if he spit in your eyes, you'd go blind in half a second." Bill continued the description of devil devices with the following comment:

And one day he showed me the devil's darning needle which mends up the old fellow's stockin's and the devil's snuff box which explodes when you mash it and one ounce of the stuff will kill a sound mule before he can lay down. Then there's some flowers that he wears in his button-hole called the devil's shoe string and the devil in the bush.⁷

These superstitions were well known to most rural Georgians, who, as children, were in awe of the dragon fly because they had been told that it was the devil's needle and of the puff ball because of its supposedly devil inspired properties. Testimony to the fact that the devil's shoe string is still considered potent may be found in the latest catalog of a Chicago novelty house which specializes in selling magic objects by mail to southern Negroes.⁸ Another creature which, according to Arp, was considered the instrument of the devil was the packsaddle worm, of which he said, "Well it's as pretty as a rainbow, just like most of the devil's contrivances, and when you crowd one of 'em on a fodderblade, you'd think that forty yaller jackets had stung you all in a bunch and with malice aforethought."⁹ His description of the packsaddle corresponds to that of the saddlebag worm, still found in cotton and cornfields in Alabama and Georgia, which gets its name from the fact that it has a brown saddlebag upon its green back. Bill had evidently had sad experience with this worm because he commented several times upon its sharp sting.

He realized how much popular interest there was in moon lore and rather skeptically enumerated some of the current beliefs. Once, when everything went wrong, he accounted for his bad luck by saying, "Saw the new moon through a brush, I reckon. On Monday two of my pigs, just littered, got drowned in the branch; Tuesday my

⁶ *Loc. cit.*

⁷ *The Farm and the Fireside*, pp. 58-59.

⁸ King Novelty Company, Latest Bargain Catalog, No. 92.2451, Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

⁹ *The Farm and the Fireside*, *loc. cit.*

shoats got into my potato patch. . . . It looks like my bad luck all comes in a bunch." Mrs. Arp, too, knew that after she had seen the new moon through a bushy treetop right over her left shoulder, she would surely have bad luck.¹⁰ Bill laughed at her and in the same vein gave the following advice to his readers:

Now is the time to plant potatoes. Be shore to plant 'em in the dark of the moon and then plant some more just two weeks later and they'll be "alle samee." I tried it last year.¹¹

He dealt out weather wisdom in a similar fashion saying, "The new moon is quite level this time, which is a sure sign that it will rain—or that it won't."¹² However, he killed his hogs when the moon was on the increase because of the belief that the meat would shrink in the pot if the hog was killed on a waning moon,¹³ and he quoted an old negro tavern porter as saying:

Ef you cuts your firewood in de light (full) o'de moon, hits gwine to burn widout no trouble nohow, but if you cuts hit in de d'ak o'de moon, hit nigh about won't burn atall.

When Bill inquired why this was true, the old negro answered,

Donno, sir, but hit's so. I knows dat. Juss so with fence rails—now yo' lay a fence rail in de dark o'de moon, and hit's gwine to sink deep in de groun' and make yo' fence all wobbly-like, but put down de bottom rail in de light o'de moon an' she wont settle any skasley an'll stand firm de yeah roun'.¹⁴

Mrs. Arp was afraid of screech owls, but she wouldn't let Bill shoot the one that sat mourning on their gate post because an old African witch doctor had told her grandmother that if a person killed a screech owl, there would surely be a death in the family. Bill tried to get rid of the owl by putting the shovel in the fire, but that didn't work, and they had to endure the sad dirge. Bill was especially worried by it because, in addition to the visit of the bird of ill omen, he remembered that all the pins he had recently seen on the floor pointed away from him, that a rabbit had run across the road in front of him, and that the last time he had come to a snake track, he hadn't been

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

¹⁴ Charles H. Smith, *Bill Arp's Scrap Book*, Atlanta, 1884, p. 94.

sure that his face had been toward the snake when he rubbed out the track, and that it was very bad luck if one didn't erase the track with his face turned toward the snake. Then, too, Mrs. Arp had a humming in her right ear. This was another funeral sign and was especially bad in view of the fact that the night before a chicken had gone to roost on the clock over the mantel piece.¹⁵

The columnist in another connection recorded a widely accepted belief in metamorphosis or transformation; namely that a hair from a black mare's tail would turn into a snake if you put it into a branch.¹⁶ He was somewhat skeptical about this superstition, but he did not hesitate to accept certain folk cures, an instance of which was that a handful of fresh earth bound on a new wound or bruise would cure it, and he said that from personal experience he had learned that the best remedy for scratches on horses' feet was walking in freshly plowed ground.¹⁷ He made note, too, of the fact that it was a habit among his friends to carry buckeyes in their pockets for good luck.¹⁸ His family consulted Griers' Almanac about weather forecasts, but here again there was more avowed disbelief than belief.¹⁹

When he told about the origin of the buzzard lope dance, which was popular among the younger set during this period, he gratified his readers' desire to hear about Negro folk material which they had adopted in their own amusements. Anyone who has seen this dance step and has also observed buzzards in the peculiar loping gait which they assume as they close in about their dead prey can readily understand how the dance arose in imitation of the birds. Bill Arp gave the following story of its origin:

My boys have got a new step now that they call the "buzzard lope", that is grand, lively, and peculiar. The story goes that an old darkey lost his aged mule and found him one Sunday evening lying dead in the woods and forty-nine buzzards feasting upon his carcass. Forty-eight of them flew away, but the forty-ninth, whose feathers were gray with age declined to retire. Looking straight at the darkey, he spread his wings about half and half like the American eagle on a silver dollar and tucked his tail under his body and drew in his chin and pulled down his vest and began to lope around the dead mule. . . . He was a greedy bird and

¹⁵ *The Farm and the Fireside*, p. 239.

¹⁶ *Bill Arp's Scrap Book*, p. 202.

¹⁷ *The Farm and the Fireside*, p. 109.

¹⁸ *Bill Arp's Scrap Book*, p. 207.

¹⁹ *The Farm and the Fireside*, p. 149.

liked his meat served rare and rejoiced that he now had the carcass all to himself, and so he loped around with alacrity. The old darky was a fiddler and dancer by instinct and inspiration. He had danced all the dances and pranced all the prances of his naborhood for half a century. He had played prompter for the white folks at a thousand frolics, and knew every step and turn and fling of the heeltap and the toe, but he had never seen such a peculiar double demi-semi-quiver shuffle as that old buzzard loped around the mule. He stood aghast. He spread his arms just half-and half and bent his back in the middle, unlimbered his ankle joints, stiffened his elbows and . . . he followed that bird around that mule for four solid hours. At dusk the tired buzzard souzed his beak into one of the dead mule's eyes and bore it away to his roost while the old darky loped all the way home to his cabin door.²⁰

Whether this is authentic folklore is open to question, but if it is not, it certainly has some of the hallmarks of the genuine article.

Arp made skillful use of familiar folk rhymes. For example, in describing the flight of his family and acquaintances from Macon before the advancing Yankees, he quoted from a childhood game, "How many miles to Milybright?" said I, but no response for their legs were long and light, and every bursting shell was an old witch on the road."²¹

Another folk game also used for illustration was William Tremble Toe, who according to Arp's version:

Catches his hens and puts 'em in pens.
Some lay eggs and some lay nine.
Wire, briar, limberlock,
Three geese in the flock
O-U-T spells out and begone.²²

In praising slavery days he presented a picture of Negroes happily picking their banjos and singing:

Run, nigger, run, de' patt roller' catch you,
Run, nigger, run, you better get away.²³

The high good humor which Arp ascribed to the singers, does not

²⁰ *The Farm and the Fireside*, pp. 282-283.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²² *Bill Arp's Scrap Book*, p. 276.

²³ *The Farm and the Fireside*, p. 316.

seem in accord with the sentiments expressed in the song, but he made it serve his own purpose.

Sayings and tall tales are sprinkled throughout his sketches—sayings based on whimsical exaggeration like that of an old drunkard who was so thirsty that "he felt like he could bite a branch in two and swaller the upper end,"²⁴ and tall tales like the one about a homemade ball that bounced out of sight and never came down until next day; and then when a little dog grabbed it, the ball took the dog up on the second bounce, and neither dog nor ball had been seen since.²⁵ There were others about practical jokers who, pretending that it was a 'possum, sold a cat as their pig in a poke; about a preacher who took more pleasure in turning sinners out of his church than in getting converts into it; and about lying hunters who boasted that they had killed nineteen wild turkeys at one shot. He told exactly how a gander pulling that he had seen had been conducted, how candles were dipped, how quilts were made, how town ball was played in his boyhood. He also described the lunches he carried to school, the clothes he wore, the hymns he sang, and the holidays his family observed.

Unfortunately these glimpses into the life that Arp and his fellow Georgians led constitute only a very small part of his writings and are scattered among his discussions of the Negro problem, his diatribes against the Yankees, and much second hand material culled from books and hastily rewritten evidently to meet a newspaper deadline. However, his works will repay careful reading because they give insight into a definite cultural milieu. They are valuable because of their portrayal of life as it was lived in nineteenth century Georgia and because of the particular versions of folklore and the rustic imagery which they have preserved.

Huntingdon College

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

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THE CAROLINA FOLK FESTIVAL

by

Arthur Palmer Hudson

The Carolina Folk Festival was held at Chapel Hill on June 18 and 19, under the auspices of the University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Folklore Council, and under the direction of Bascom Lamar Lunsford, who had planned and organized it. The occasion had its local precedent in the Dogwood Festival of the 1930's. Its management was perhaps the most expert procurable. Shortly before the event, Mr. Lunsford, already well known to North Carolinians as director of the perennially successful Asheville Folk Festival, had been presented to the nation by a color-illustrated article in the *Saturday Evening Post* of May 22. In the setting of Kenan Stadium (conventionally but always accurately described as "beautiful Kenan Stadium"), the Carolina Festival exhibited features typical of festivals at Asheville, White Top, St. Louis, and Washington. The performers were a dozen bands, eight or ten square-dance teams, and perhaps a hundred individual singers, dancers, and instrumentalists. In the afternoons, under the lancing June sun, and in the evenings, under the summer stars, with benefit of modern science in a public-address system, the "Minstrel Man of the Appalachians," invoking the principles of spontaneous combustion and chain reaction, developed out of these elements a continuous program of music, dance, and song. When native talent was tardy or thin, the maestro switched on Mrs. Lillie Lee Baker's troupe of forty-five guest performers from Austin, who demonstrated with almost-professional finesse how things are done "deep in the heart of Texas."

Bands and square-dance teams offered the *pièces de résistance* of the feast. Clegg Garner's from Randolph County, the Lloyd String from Orange County, the Wildcat Group of that ilk, the Guilford Swingsters from Greensboro, the Green Valley Boys from Randolph, and several combinations from Texas played *Arkansaw Traveler*, *Buffalo Gals*, *The Flop-Eared Mule*, *Sweet Cider*, *Turkey Buzzard*, *Cripple Creek*, *Nobody's Business*, and a score more tunes of the sort. To many of these the square-dance teams performed their complicated and beautiful evolutions—Bird in the Cage, the Grapevine, Star of the West, and Wagon Wheel. In the spirited competition, the smooth Guilford Swingsters, composed of a group of postal clerks and their womenfolk, from Greensboro, and a delightful pony team of fifth-and-sixth graders from an Asheville school, were awarded "firsts." The

monotony of this feature of the programs was partially relieved by exhibition solo dances of the clog and the buck-and-wing type and by the Highland Fling, performed by a small group of girls, *en costume*, from Fayetteville, in the traditional manner of their Scots ancestors of the Cape Fear country.

Of the instrumental music, memorable numbers were *Lady Hamilton* and *The Gray Eagle*, fiddled by Marcus Martin of Macon, and *The Tennessee Wagon*, another fiddle piece, by Henry Hudson of Austin; and a banjo piece, *John Henry*, by George Pegram.

Pegram, a broadaxe-finished mountaineer under a ten-gallon hat, vied with Clegg Garner of Randolph for honors as a banjo soloist. George's *Good Ol' Mountain Dew* and Clegg's *Sundown* were "special request" numbers on every program after the first. A natural clown, with an excellent repertory of banjo songs and solo dance numbers, and with an inexhaustible fund of showmanship, George was the individual star of the Festival, though there were some in the audience who preferred the quiet charm of Clegg's banjo pieces. These two, with Director Lunsford joining George in *I Wish I Was a Mole in the Ground*, gave a noteworthy revelation of the rustic raciness of banjo songs, which, because of their brevity and their dependence on instrumental accompaniment, have been somewhat neglected by folksong scholars. (One valuable result of the Festival is that Mr. Hoyle Bruton of Chapel Hill has made recordings of Clegg Garner's repertory.)

Of greater interest than the banjo specialties, to some of the folksong enthusiasts, though not to the audience as a whole, were the old traditional ballads and songs, rendered by individuals from various corners of North Carolina and by a few visitors from other quarters. Miss Joan Moser of Swannanoa, accompanying herself on the guitar, delighted the audience with *The Old Farmer's Curst Wife*. Her father, Artus M. Moser, who learned his songs from informants of Cecil J. Sharp, sang flawlessly a long and interesting version of *Lord Bateman*. On a portion of the program broadcast by radio, I. G. Greer, one of the best ballad-singers in North Carolina, sang *Black Jack Davy*, with dulcimer accompaniment by Mrs. Greer. Mrs. Essie Ruth ("Calamity Jane") of Randolph County, scene of a doleful tragedy 140 years ago, was the right person to sing *Naomi Wise*, North Carolina's premier native ballad. She also gave lusty treatment to *Jesse James*. Mr and Mrs. Lamar Lunsford, Junior, offered a moving rendition of *Walk That Lonesome Road*, one of the few old spirituals exhibited on the programs.

Attendance on the Festival, ranging from a few hundred at the hot afternoon programs to several thousand in the evenings, and the favorable comments of responsible people who participated, supported the Director's and the Folklore Council's decision to make it an annual affair. It is the opinion of the local folklorists that, though it emphasizes the spectacular and exhibitory types of folklore at the expense of the quieter but equally significant types, such a festival is of value in bringing traditions to public notice and in demonstrating their universal human interest. It even brings into temporary currency a few precious bits that might otherwise die, unrecorded, in a lonesome cove. Certainly the Carolina Folk Festival brought to light a number of interesting specimens that would have made valuable additions to the Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, now approaching publication. "It is always darkest under the lantern": Several Chapel Hill professors were tickled to see how much authentic folklore flowed into Kenan Stadium from neighborhoods in Orange County not ten miles away. Mr. Lunsford is a skillful Pied Piper. Not only so; he is an honest, knowledgeable, and sympathetic director. In his hands a folk festival preserves, as well as could be expected, the authenticity of traditional forms of enjoyment. Though these were never meant to be public spectacles, he shows that they have a high entertainment value. Folklore is not spoiled by exhibiting itself in a football stadium, with microphones, public-address systems, photographers' flashbulbs, *et cetera*. The green turf, the trees overlooking the stands, the sun and the stars, the fireflies, and sleepy thrushes in the undergrowth are its friends, and they stand by.

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MINNESOTA'S ODE TO THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR

by

Philip D. Jordan

The opening of Minnesota's great ore-bearing regions west of Duluth in the closing decades of the nineteenth century brought with it an exaggerated respect for wealth in a vicinity that previously had been relatively poor except for lumbering. In scores of mining towns, the Minnesotan struggled to make money. Mergers, combines, dickers, and deals all were a part of an ordinary day's work. Big business was riding triumphantly in Minnesota as elsewhere. The dollar was the sign of success. On the iron range a great folklore developed about this success theme. Stories lampooned the businessman and editors delighted in poking fun at "get-rich-quick-Pauls."

A favorite humorous attack seems first to have appeared in *The Hibbing Sentinel* of September 29, 1894. It was frequently quoted on the range and even today is remembered by old-timers, some of whom can recite large fragments from it. The "Almighty Dollar," whose authorship is unknown is here reprinted as it originally appeared, a perfect specimen of folk humor directed toward a contemporary philosophy.

Almighty Dollar

Beloved Brethren, bend close your ear that not a word many escape and join with us in singing the doxology, new style:

Almighty Dollar, thy shining face,
Bespeaks thy wondrous power,
In our pockets make thy resting place,
We need thee every hour.

Oh! Almighty Dollar, our acknowledged governor and benefactor, we desire to approach thee, on this and every occasion with that reverence which is due superior excellence, and that regard which should ever be cherished for exalted greatness.

Almighty Dollar, without thee in the world we can do nothing, but with thee we can do all things. When sickness lays its hand upon us, thou canst provide for us the tenderest of nurses, the most skillful physicians, and when the last struggle of mortality is over, and we are being borne to the last resting place for the dead, thou canst provide a band of music and a military escort to accompany us thither,

and last but not least, erect a magnificent monument over our graves, with a lying epitaph to perpetuate our memories.

And while here, in the midst of misfortunes and temptations of this life, we perhaps are accused of crime and brought before magistrates; thou, Almighty Dollar, canst secure to us a feed lawyer, a bribed judge, a packed jury, and we go scot free.

Be thou with us, we pray thee, in all thy decimal parts, for we feel that thou art the one altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand. We feel there is no condition in life where thy potent and all powerful charms are not felt.

In thy absence how gloomy is the household and how desolate the hearthstone, but when thou, Almighty Dollar, art with us, how gleefully the beef steak sings on the gridiron, how genial the warmth that anthracite coal or tamarack wood diffuses throughout the apartment, and what an exuberance of joy continues to swell every bosom.

Thou art the joy of our youth and the solace of old age. Thou canst adorn the gentlemen, and thou feedest the jackass. Thou art the favorite of the philosopher and the idol of the lunk-head.

When an election is to be carried, O! Almighty Dollar, thou art the most potent argument of the politicians and the demagogues and the umpire that decides the contest.

Almighty Dollar, thou art worshiped universally. Thou hast no hypocrites in thy temples or false hearts at thy altars. Kings and courtiers bow before thee, and all nations adore; thou art loved by the civilized and savage alike, with unfeigned and unfaltering affection.

O! Almighty Dollar, in the acquirement and defense of human liberty thou hast placed armies in the field and navies on the ocean. At the uplifting of thy powerful hand their thunder would break and their lightnings flash.

Thou hast bound continents together by the telegraph cables, and made the various products of our country available to all by a perfect net of railroads.

The forests have been prostrated, and the desert made to bloom as the rose.

We continue to regard thee as the handmaid of religion, and the twin sister of charity. When the light of thy shining countenance breaks through the gloom of famine stricken Ireland, the shamrock wears a greener hue and the harps resound in loftier strains, while weeping mothers and starving children, rise above their wails of woe.

as their hearts and their heels resound to the thrilling strains of St. Patrick's Day in the morning.

O! Almighty Dollar, be with us we beseech thee, attended by an inexpressible number of thy ministering angels, made in thine own image, even though they be but silver quarters, whose glaring light shall illumine the vale of penury and want with heavenly radiance which shall cause the soul to break forth in acclamation of joy.

Almighty Dollar, thou art the awakener of our energies, the guide of our footsteps and goal of our being. Guided by thy silvery light we hope to reach the "golden gate" triumphantly; enter while angel hands harmoniously sweep their golden harps, and we, on the golden streets, in the highest exhilaration of feeling, and with jubilant emotions, strike the Highland fling.

And now, Almighty Dollar, in closing this invocation we realize and acknowledge that thou art the God of our grandfathers, the two-fold God of their children and the three-fold God of their grandchildren. Permit us to possess thee in abundance, and of all thy varied excellence, is our constant and unwavering prayer.

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NEBRASKA SMART SAYINGS¹

by

Ruth Odell

The smart sayings, responses, repartee, or comments of Nebraska folk, their stock facetious remarks, probably differ little from those of neighboring and other States. Indeed, they may be nearly identical with those heard all over the country. Some are of undoubted age and wide circulation, some new, and some perhaps localisms. But a representative display of them and an attempt so to group them as to show their general nature, their range, and how they are used should have interest; especially since, so far as I know, they have not had separate attention hitherto. Most of the sayings are well worn and they often seem to array themselves with or alongside of proverbs. The determining factor in distinguishing between them and proverbs, the factor delimiting the illustrative lists, is that they are jocose, or are meant to be. Their speakers think them bright or smart or witty. This is not a staple characteristic of proverbs, which usually illustrate some point or state some truth; but of course there is no little overlapping of proverbs and what I call popular smart sayings.

As they are cited here, these sayings come from older rather than younger persons, from the moderately rather than the well educated, and perhaps more from outlying regions than from cities. The lists are, of course, far from exhaustive. I have curtailed entries rather than tried to swell them. But I have attempted in my selection of citations to make them as representative as may be of this type of folk utterance. The sayings entered come from the late nineteenth and the twentieth century and most are still in circulation.

The topics in the foreground are, as to be expected, human nature and human life. Concerning these have arisen and arise constantly criticism, characterization, comment, and wise or pseudo-wise utterances. The leading trend, as again to be expected, is toward disparagement. Emphasis is on the description of physical appearance and on such traits and qualities as meanness, egotism, and stupidity. Rarely does one come upon praise or approval.

¹ Read before the Western Folklore Conference, University of Denver, July 16, 1948.

*Illustrative Lists***I****BRIGHT RESPONSES**

The first group consists of responses, in most instances replies to serious questions. Many show a fondness for puns and plays on words.

1. "What for?"
"Cat's fur to make kitten britches."
2. "Can you change a five?"
"Yes, from your hand to mine."
3. "Where's it at?"
"Just before the *at*."
4. "The train's gone."
"Yes, I see its tracks."
5. "Heard the latest?"
"No, it ain't out yet."
6. "Well, I haven't seen you this long week back."
"Don't call me no long weak back, you."
7. "Are you ready?"
"No, I'm Ready's brother."
8. "Speaking of insects, how's your aunt?"
9. "Begin the conversation; it's your nickel." (On answering the ring of the telephone.)
10. "Excuse my back; my face is dirty."
11. "When will you be back?"
"Oh, don't expect me till you see me."
12. "Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no lies." (In answer to any request for information.)
13. "That's for me to know and you to find out."
14. "Why weren't you present?"
"I got so mad Saturday it took me until Monday to get my heels cooled."
15. "I may come to see you tomorrow."
"Well, stop a mile away."
16. "Oh, say . . ."
"Say it yourself; your mouth's open."
17. "You won't see me again for a good while."
"If I never see you again, it will be too soon."
18. "Don't you know there's a war on?" (Too familiar to everybody to need any explication.)

II

SAYINGS ABOUT PERSONS

Physical Appearance

Sayings about persons run from disparaging comments on faces to equally unflattering remarks about stature, girth, gait, apparel, and grooming.

1. "He's ugly as a mud fence."
2. "Her face would to stop a clock."
3. (Or going a step beyond—)
"Hers is the face that stopped a thousand clocks."
4. "She's homely enough to sour milk."
5. "She's such a fright she scares the young ones."
6. "He looks like he'd been dragged through a knot-hole."
7. "She's skinny as a rail."
8. "He looks like a scarecrow."
9. "He's nothing but a little sawed-off runt."
10. "He's knee-high to a grass-hopper." Or "to a duck."
11. "That's a face that only a mother could love."
12. "He's fat as a fool."
13. "He's fat as a butter ball."
14. "He's a tub of lard."
15. "She looked like a sack of meal with a string around the middle."
16. "She's all painted up like a new saloon."
17. "She's wearing her Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes."
18. "We're all dressed up and nowhere to go."
19. "She looks like Mrs. Astor's plush horse." Or "is all dressed up like Mrs. Astor's plush horse."
20. "She's developed middle-age spread."
21. "She was wearing that favorite suit of hers—the rump-sprung one."
22. "That girl is about as graceful as a cow with a crutch."
23. "I never saw anybody so unhandy. Her fingers are all thumbs."

Egotism

Egotism and self-aggrandisement evoke universal and merciless ribbing. Usually expressed in the third person, they are sometimes voiced in the second.

1. "He thinks he's some 'punkins'."
2. "He thinks he's a big bug."
3. "He's got the world by the tail with a downhill pull."
4. "He wants the world with a fence around it and a slice of the moon."
5. "He's too big for his britches."
6. "He's forever blowing his own horn."
7. "That guy's got the nerve of a brass monkey."
8. "I knew him when he used to be able to get his hat on."
9. "How he loves the sound of his own voice."
10. "He's Mr. Big-I, Little-you." Or simply "Mr. Big."
11. "He's all swelled up like a poisoned pup."
12. "I've just seen the Grand Slam."
13. "You're not the only pebble on the beach."
14. "Come off your perch." Or "your high horse."

Garrulity

The man who married a dumb wife was not the last person to satirize garrulity. Unfavorable reactions to the person who talks too much are numerous.

1. "Was that you talkin', or the wind blowin'?"
2. "Her tongue runs on ball bearings."
3. "Her tongue is loose at both ends and tied in the middle."
4. "She talks a blue streak."
5. "He runs off at the mouth."
6. "She can talk an arm off."
7. "She can talk the hind leg off a donkey."
8. "He's a regular perforated gas tank."
9. "Keep your tongue within your teeth."
10. "Button up your lip."
11. "He talked so fast I couldn't get a word in edgewise."

Weak Mentality

Persons whom a New Englander might call "pixilated" are described with a mixture of exasperation and pitying tolerance.

1. "He must have been dropped on his head."
2. "She just don't know whether she's coming or going."
3. "He don't know enough to pound sand in a rat hole."
4. "He was behind the door when the brains was passed out."
5. "He don't know beans when the bag's open."
6. "She's as nutty as a fruit cake."
7. "He's got a screw loose somewhere."
8. "He's got bats in his belfry." Or "bees in his bonnet."
9. "He's as balmy as a breeze."
10. "She couldn't even boil water without scorching it."
11. "She'd lose her head if it wasn't fastened on."
12. "Don't blame the poor soul. There's nobody home."
13. "He's got absolutely nothing between the ears."
14. "He's off his base." Or "off the beam. Or "off the reservation."

Movement and Action

Verbs of movement and action sound as if compiled from a textbook of Basic English.

1. "Shake a leg."
2. "Get a wiggle on."
3. "Get a move on."
4. "Get a hustle on."
5. "Get the budge on."
6. "Roll your tail."
7. "Waltz her around again, Willie."
8. "Sashay through the cornfield."
9. "Hightail out."
10. "Work like greased lightning."
11. "Run like a house afire."
12. "Run around like a chicken with its head cut off."

13. "Turn around on a dime."
14. "Race your motor."
15. "Sit like a bump on a log."
16. "To be ready in three shakes of a sheep's tail." Or "in three shakes of a dead lamb's tail."
17. "To pussy-foot."
18. "To beat it."

III

SAYINGS ABOUT GENERAL MATTERS

Advice and Adjuration

Advice or adjuration is available for almost every kind of situation and is drawn from almost every kind of activity.

1. "Don't monkey with the buzz saw." (Don't take dangerous chances.)
2. "Keep your oar out." (Do not meddle in the affair.)
3. "Don't cut off your nose to spite your face."
4. "Stick around awhile; we're going to open a keg of nails."
5. "Come back when you can't stay so long."
6. "Sign your John Henry here." Or "Put you John Henry on it." (Let me have your signature.)
7. "Hold everything."
8. "Hold the fort; I'm coming."
9. "Pat is here; let the battle go on."
10. "Park your gum here." (On the under side of a chair.)
11. "Take a look-see." (Make a swift examination.)
12. "Git there fustest with the mostest."
13. "If any man attempts to haul down the American flag, spot him on the shoot."
14. "Sometimes be sharp; never be flat; always be natural."
15. "Mind your p's and q's."
16. "Lay back your ears and listen."
17. "Pull in your horns."

18. "Grind your teeth and spit 'em out."
19. "Shinny on your own side."
20. "Just tend to your own knitting."
21. "If you can't work your head, you'll have to work your heels."
Or "Let your head save your heels."
22. "Go roll a hoop." Or "lay an egg." Or "jump in the lake."
23. "Douse the glim." (Put out the light.)
24. "Kick him in the slats."
25. "That'll sure knock the socks off him."
26. "Don't scare the pants off him."
27. "Don't work all day in a peck measure." (Don't work endlessly to no purpose.)
28. "Don't worry. There'll be another along soon." (When a date or an appointment has been missed.)

Comments

Judgments of specific persons or experiences have resulted in a series of stock comments.

1. "If it 'ud been a snake it 'ud a bit you."
2. "She's always rubberin' on a party line." (Listening in.)
3. "That's so old it has whiskers." (Of a joke or an anecdote.)
4. "I see,' said the blind man." (Comment upon an explanation.)
5. "Give me about as much as the width of a gnat's eyebrow."
(Request for a small amount.)
6. "That a fine howdy-do."
7. "He's serving as chambermaid in the livery barn."
8. "There's dirty work at the crossroads."
9. "This is more fun than I've had since the hogs ate my baby brother."
10. "That's Mrs. Astorbilt. She's simply crawling."
11. "That's between you and me and the gate-post."
12. "I wouldn't know him from Adam's off ox."
13. "It's time to wind the cat and put out the clock."
14. "That's as certain as death and taxes."

15. "You'd have to get up early to get ahead of him."
16. "Well, he certainly robbed the cradle." (Of a man who married a woman much younger than himself.)
17. "Don't spill the beans." (Don't tell the secret.)
18. "Age before beauty." (As two persons are about to go through the same door.)
19. "We planned it that way."

Bits of Wisdom

More generalized bits of facetiousness provide a homely kind of pseudo-philosophy.

1. "It'll all come out in the wash."
2. "Many an honest heart beats under a one-dollar corset."
3. "There's a sucker born every minute."
4. "It pays to pester."
5. "A hair on the head is worth two in the brush."
6. "Many are the meddlesome Matties."
7. "It's never a good idea to stick your neck out."
8. "Remember that no matter how young a prune is he's always wrinkled."

Barnyardisms

Inevitably, the speech of the frontiersman and of his descendants is laced with figures drawn from the barnyard.

1. "A bawling cow soon forgets her calf."
2. "'Everybody to his taste,' said the old lady as she kissed the cow."
3. "He's always behind, like an old cow's tail."
4. "He keeps a gentleman cow."
5. "They're commoner than pig tracks."
6. "He got the wrong boar by the tail."
7. "She drove her pigs to a poor market." (Made a poor marriage.)
8. "Yeah, that's true, in a pig's eye."
9. "Well, now, that's a horse of a different color."

10. "He's on his high horse again."
11. "Get off your high horse."
12. "Hold your horses."
13. "He's always got his tail over the dashboard."
14. "They flew the coop."
15. "I'd say she was a gone gosling."
16. "He's a dead duck."
17. "She's no spring chicken."
18. "Now let's talk turkey."
19. "They raise cackleberries." (Eggs.)
20. "Has the cat got your tongue?"

IV

PEJORATIVE SIMILES

Condemnation of undesirable traits has produced a very large list of pejorative similes.

1. "Busier than a one-armed paper-hanger with hives."
2. "Busy as an old hen with one chick." (Or "Fussy as an old hen with one chick.")
3. "Clear as mud." (Spoken in scorn of an explanation.)
4. "Crazy as a bed bug."
5. "Common as dirt."
6. "Crosser than two sticks."
7. "Crosser than a panther with a festered paw."
8. "Crooked as a dog's hind leg."
9. "Crooked as a corkscrew."
10. "So crooked he can't lie straight in bed."
11. "As independent as a hog on ice."
12. "Lower than the belly of a snake."
13. "Light-fingered." (Of one who is dishonest and thieving.)
14. "Sticky-fingered." (Of one who is dishonest and thieving.)
15. "Mad as a wet hen."

16. "Mad as a hornet."
17. "Mad enough to eat nails."
18. "Mad enough to bite a tenpenny nail in two."
19. "Mean as mud."
20. "Mean enough to steal pennies from a blind man." Or "from his grandmother's eyes."
21. "Older than God."
22. "Poor as Job's turkey."
23. "Poor as a church mouse."
24. "Pure as the snow, but she drifted."
25. "Pure and clean as a running sewer."
26. "Rich as manure."
27. "Small potatoes and few in a hill."
28. "It sticks out like a sore thumb."
29. "Stubborn as a mule."
30. "So stubborn she'd swim down stream."
31. "Slower than molasses in January."
32. "Sore as a boil."
33. "Sore as a boiled owl."
34. "So surprised you could have knocked him over with a feather."
35. "Tight as the bark on a tree." (Of a penurious or stingy person.)
36. "Scared of his shadow." Or "to call his soul his own."
37. "Tougher than boarding-house beef steak."
38. "Tough enough to spit nails."
39. "Wet as a drowned rat."

V

MISCELLANOUS

A few miscellaneous sayings seem to belong in no preceding category.

1. "Not since Heck was a pup."
2. "Yes, when Hell freezes over."

3. "As safe as a celluloid cat chased by an asbestos dog in Hell."
4. "Hungry enough to eat a barbed-wire fence."
5. "It's a case of the pot's calling the kettle black."
6. "She wears the pants in that family."
7. "He'd speak disrespectfully even of the equator."
8. "I wouldn't trust him any farther than I could throw a bull by the tail."
9. "He'd better be careful. He might bite himself in the leg and get hydrophobia."
10. "I hate that worse than the devil hates holy water."
11. "He's pushing up the daisies now."
12. Some facetious names applied to members of a profession are:

Dentist—"tooth carpenter."

Doctor—"saw bones" and "pill peddler."

Preacher—"sky pilot."

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FOLKLORE FROM EDGEFIELD COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA*

by

Margaret M. Bryant

These tales and riddles, which were largely collected in Edgefield County in South Carolina, are a part of a larger collection of folklore items, gathered during the summer of 1945. Most of these are familiar to me, for I grew up in this vicinity. The folk tales, for instance, I had Dicie Smith, my informant, tell me over and over again as she worked about the house when I was a child. At this young age I also enjoyed trying to find the answers to the many riddles I heard. This section of South Carolina, with its large body of white and colored people who, for the most part, live in rural surroundings, is rich in folklore. The materials included here are representative of the folklore to be found in abundance there.

FOLK TALES¹

1. The Ridin' Horse

Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox they were goin' courtin'. Ol' Brer Fox he fooled Brer Rabbit. Brer Fox says to Brer Rabbit, "I'll ride you one-half way and you'll ride me the other half." Brer Rabbit accepted the offer. Brer Rabbit let ol' Brer Fox get on his back. Brer Fox rode one-half way to the girl's house. But when ol' Brer Fox got half way Brer Fox put on his ridin' spur and put the spur to Brer Rabbit. Brer Fox rode all the way up to the girl's gate. Ol' Brer Rabbit had told her Brer Fox was his horse. The girl then said, "Brer Rabbit, Brer Fox was your ridin' horse and I see he is ridin' you up to the gate."

2. Tar Man

Ol' Brer Fox he everywhere he'd go he'd jump up on stumps and anything built up. So one day he run up on a tar man and jump on him. First, he hit him with one foot and it stuck. Then he hit him with the other. It stuck. Then he hauled away and hit him with the third one and told him he'd better turn him loose. But it stuck. Then ol' Brer Fox said, "Looker here, man, turn me a loose or I'll

*Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles containing folklore materials collected from Edgefield County, South Carolina.

¹ Informant, Dicie Smith of Trenton, South Carolina.

try you with the las' one I got. He hauled away and hit him with his las' foot and it stuck. So there he was stuck to the tar man with all four. Then Brer Fox said, "Look here! You got all four. I can't kick no more but you not get my mouth." So there he stayed.

3. The Pot of Turnips

Brer Fox and Brer Pig were goin' to the cabbage field. Brer Fox he thought Brer Pig was goin' at twelve o'clock. So Brer Fox went to the cabbage patch but Brer Pig had got there at eleven and had got his cabbage. He had been there and had got back. Brer Fox then went on to Brer Pig's house and Brer Fox says, "Brer Pig, here, come on, let's go." Brer Pig answers, "Brer Fox, I already been and got back." Then Brer Fox wanted Brer Pig to go to the turnip patch. They were to go at four o'clock. Brer Pig again went early and got his turnips. Brer Pig had his turnips in the pot cookin' when Brer Fox arrives and says, "Come on, Brer Pig, let's go to the turnip patch." Brer Pig answers, "I done been and got on the nicest pot cookin' you ever saw." Brer Fox, 'stonished like, says, "You have?" "Don't you smell 'em?" says Brer Pig. Brer Fox, smellin' the turnips, answers, "Yes." Then Brer Pig says, "Come on in, Brer Fox, and eat breakfas' with me." Brer Fox didn't know any better. Brer Pig says, "You see that ladder there. You come right up them steps and you skate right on down the chimney and you be inside the house." Brer Pig had a pot of turnips boilin' in the center of the chimney, and Brer Fox fell right into the pot and that ended Brer Fox on Brer Pig's trail, for Brer Fox was killed.

4. Countin' Out Corn

There was a colored boy who had to pass a graveyard every day on his way home from work. One day he had to stay later than usual—until it was very dark. As he got near the graveyard he heard voices. He stopped dead in his tracks and he heard, "This'n is yours and this'n is mine. This'n is yours and this'n is mine. This'n is yours and this'n is mine." He lit out back to the white yard and called to the boss: "Boss, there's ghosts down in the graveyard. God and the devil are dividin' up souls." The boss thought he was lyin' and he told him that if he went down there with him for nothin' he would beat the devil out of him with his walkin' stick. When they got to the gate, they heard, "This'n is yours and this'n is mine. This'n is yours and this'n is mine. This'n is yours and this'n is

mine . . . and that's all except them two at the gate." Then the old gray-headed white man threw down his walkin' stick and outrun the young colored boy back to the house.

And do you know what it was? It was two men who had been a-stealin' corn. They went out in a corn field and gathered a sack a piece one night. They then decided to go to the graveyard to divide it out so that one wouldn't steal from the other. But in goin' in at the gate they dropped two ears.

5. The Pot of Big Hominy

A man was cookin' a pot of big hominy. He stole the corn and was cookin' it with ashes. He cooked it until he had to go to work the next mornin'. He left it cookin'. When he came home to dinner he built the fire up again and left it cookin'. When he came home at night it was done. So he washed it and got it all ready. He poured it in his pot with his fats to cook. A neighbor visitin' him that night asked him whether his hominy were done. He said, "Yes," and turned to his table to pick up somethin'. The neighbor grabbed the whole pot full and run with it. The man knew he had stole the corn. So he ran to the door and yelled, "You had better bring my pot back here." He was afraid to say corn for he had stole it. He kept saying, "You had better bring my pot back." Finally, he whispered, "corn," but the other man got away with the pot. He knew the man had stole the corn. So he lost it.

6. The Prayin' Cow

A man went out on Ol' Chris'mas and saw the cow prayin'. The man said the cow got down on her knees. He said that when the cow got up, he said to her, "What was you prayin'?" The cow replied, "I was prayin' to get strong enough to haul lumber to build your coffin with." The man went to runnin'.

7. The Return of the Country Girl

Once a country girl moved to the city. After she'd lived there for many years, she decided to visit her old home. She came down but was so highfalutin' no one could associate with her. Many neighbors passed goin' to church, but she refused to go with any of them. She dressed later an' started on her way to church. By the side of the road she saw some cows. The old male cow took after her. She run as fast as she could with the male cow after her. Finally she

reached the fence near the church an' jumped it. She was very tired. Out of breath, she run up in the crowd. She said, "Oh, he like to got me!" Then someone asked, "Who like to got you?" She said again, "He like to got me!" Again someone in the crowd asked, "Who like to got you?" She then said, "Oh, the cow's husband." She wouldn't say, "The bull."

8. Two Friends

Once there were two great friends, John an' James. John an' James would cut wood by the cord. Then they would divide the money they made in half. They would buy milk an' divide it in half. Everything they bought they would divide in half. So John one day talked James into the notion of buying a milk cow. They counted out the money. John said, "James, you better let me do the payin' off." James said, "O. K." So John paid off. The next day they had to buy some feed for the cow. So John said to James, "James, this cow must have some food." James went along an' bought the food. The next morning, John said, "James, this cow must have some water." So James pumped the water. The next morning, James said, "John, how is this? I have to buy the food for the cow an' pump all the water that she drinks an' don't get any milk or butter." John said, "That is because the front of the cow is yours an' the back of the cow is mine." James said to himself, "Very good, John. I'll get even with you." So James killed his half an' John's half died.

RIDDLES

1. Sisters and brothers have I none,
But that man's father is my father's son.

Ans. A man is speaking of his own son.

2. As I went and as I come,
Through the dead the living sprung.
Six sot, seven seek,
Tell the riddle I can't undo
And I'll set you free.

Ans. A man had a Negro slave whom he sent to mill. He told the Negro that if he would give him a riddle he couldn't answer, he would set him free. On the way the Negro saw a partridge sitting on six eggs in a dead horse head. She and her little ones would make seven.

3. One duck ahead of two ducks,
One duck between two ducks,

And one duck behind two ducks.
How many ducks in all?

Ans. Three ducks.

4. Whitey went upstairs,
Whitey came downstairs,
Whitey left Whitey upstairs.

Ans. A hen went upstairs and laid an egg.

5. As I was going to St. Ives,
I met a man with seven wives.
Each wife had seven sacks,
Each sack had seven cats,
Each cat had seven kits.
Kits, cats, sacks, and wives,
How many were going to St. Ives?

Ans. Only one.

6. Big at the bottom,
Little at the top,
In the middle go flippety flop.

Ans. Churn.

7. I rode over London Bridge but yet walked.

Ans. A little dog named Yet walked.

Variant. A man rode but yet he walked.

8. Water over water
And yet walk over.

Ans. A woman walking on a bridge with a pail of water on her head.

9. Round as a saucer (an apple),
Deep as a cup,
All the king's horses
Can't pull it up.

Ans. Well.

10. Has eyes that can't see,
Tongue that can't talk
An' soul that cannot be saved.

Ans. Shoe.

11. Unikle, krunikle, kronikle, ker
 Sitting under hictickle, hactickle,
 Pictickle, present, feather fin.
 I shot that feather fin
 Sitting under the hictickle, hactickle,
 Pictickle, present.

Ans. Rabbit under a cedar tree.

12. Round as a biscuit,
 As busy as a bee,
 The prettiest little thing
 You ever did see.

Ans. A watch.

13. White as milk, and milk it isn't.
 (Green as grass, and grass it isn't.)
 Red as blood, and blood it isn't.
 Black as ink, and ink it isn't.

Ans. Blackberry.

14. Little Nancy Etticoat,
 In a white petticoat.
 The longer she stands,
 The shorter she grows.

Ans. Candle.

15. As I was going over London Bridge,
 I met a man.
 I drunk his blood,
 And threw his hide away.

Ans. Watermelon.

16. Humpty dumpty on the wall,
 Humpty dumpty on the floor,
 All King George's horses can't
 Put humpty dumpty together any more.

Ans. Egg.

17. Eleven pears were hangin' high,
 Eleven men came ridin' by.
 Each took a pear.
 How many pears were left?

Ans. Ten. One man was named Each.

18. When I was goin' 'cross London Bridge,
I met an ol' man on the way.
I broke his neck an' drunk his blood,
An' threw his body away.

Ans. Bottle of liquor.

19. On the hill there's a green house,
In that green house there's a white house,
In that white house there's a red house,
In that red house are a lot of little black and white men.

Ans. Watermelon.

20. The man who made it didn't use it,
The man who bought it didn't want it,
The man who used it didn't know it.

Ans. A Coffin.

Variant:

The man who made it wanted to sell it,
The man who bought it never used it,
The man who used it didn't see it.

21. Four corners round about,
All King George's horses can't pull it up.

Ans. A well.

22. Black within (and red without),
Four corners round about.

Ans. Chimney.

23. Black an' white and re(a)d all over.

Ans. Newspaper.

24. Pease porridge hot,
Pease porridge cold,
Pease porridge in the pot
Nine days old.
Spell *that* in four letters.

Ans. *That*.

25. Green as grass, white as milk,
Black as ink, sweet as sugar.

Ans. Watermelon.

26. What has an eye,
But cannot see?

Ans. Needle.

27. What has a head,
But has no hair?

Ans. Pin.

28. What has teeth,
But cannot eat?

Ans. Saw.

29. What has a face,
But cannot see?

Ans. Clock.

30. What has hands
An' has no fingers?

Ans. Clock.

31. What has legs,
But cannot walk?

Ans. Table.

32. What can run but can't walk?

Ans. A train.

33. What goes all 'round the house
And makes but one track?

Ans. Wheelbarrow.

34. What goes 'round
An' makes a thousand tracks?

Ans. A broom.

35. What goes all over the house in the daytime
And sits in the corner at night?

Ans. The broom.

36. What comes up to the door and never comes in?

Ans. Path.

37. What goes to a spring and never drinks?

Ans. Path.

38. What has a trunk
But needs no key?

Ans. Elephant.

39. A thousand eyes,
But yet can't see.

Ans. A sifter.

40. Dead in the middle,
'Live at each end.

Ans. Horse, plough, and a man.

41. What has a mouth
But cannot eat?

Ans. Doll.

42. What has a hand but cannot feel?

Ans. Clock.

43. What has a tongue but no mouth?

Ans. Shoe.

44. What has fingers but no toes?

Ans. Glove.

45. Red within, black without,
Hoist your leg and poke it in.

Ans. Boot.

46. Four legs up,
Four legs down,
Soft in the middle,
An' hard all 'round.

Ans. Bed.

47. What jumps over a fence
And leaves his tail behind him?

Ans. Needle and thread.

48. It's a thing you have that I use more than you.

Ans. Your name.

49. Runs all day an' stands at night
With his tongue stickin' out.

Ans. Wagon.

50. What goes to water an' never drinks ?

Ans. Wagon.

51. Whitey run Whitey out of Whitey.

Ans. White man running a white cow out of a white cotton field.

52. The more you cut it, the longer it gets.

Ans. Ditch.

53. Three legs up and six legs down.

Ans. A man riding a horse with a pot on his head.

54. Look in my face, I am somebody;
Scratch me on the back, I am nobody.

Ans. Mirror.

Variant:

Use me right and I am everybody;
Scratch my back and I am nobody.

55. When is a door not a door?

Ans. When it is a-jar.

56. What is it,
Has a mouth and doesn't eat,
Has a bed and doesn't sleep?

Ans. River.

57. House full, room full,
An' can't catch a hand full.

Ans. Smoke.

58. Why does a hen cross a road?

Ans. To get on the other side.

59. What kin is a child to his father
When he's not his son?

Ans. His daughter.

60. Why is a roomful of married women similar to an empty room?

Ans. Because there is not a single one in it.

61. A man had twenty sick sheep (sounds like twenty-six).
One died. How many did he have left?

Ans. Nineteen. (The guesser usually says twenty-five.)

62. John had a clean thing and Mary had a hairy thing.
John stuck his clean thing in Mary's hairy thing.
What is it?

Ans. Knife in hog's throat.

63. The ol' woman pulled it, an' pitted it an' patted it;
The ol' man off with his breeches an' jumped at it.

Ans. Bed.

64. Why didn't the woman swallow her apron?

Ans. Because it fit next to her stomach.

65. What is it that is black when it is clean and white when it is dirty?

Ans. Blackboard.

66. What is it that is never out of sight?

Ans. The letter *I*.

67. What is it that a train cannot move without and yet still it is of no use to it?

Ans. Noise.

68. Which is the smallest bridge in the world?

Ans. The bridge of your nose.

69. What is it that is seldom used by you and generally called by others?

Ans. Your name.

70. What is it that is neither flesh nor bone, and yet has four fingers?

Ans. A glove.

71. Four fingers and a thumb,
Yet flesh and bone have I none.

Ans. A glove.

72. If there are five birds on a tree and a hunter kills two of them
and these fall down, how many are left in the tree?

Ans. None; the rest have flown away.

73. What has four eyes and can't see?

Ans. Mississippi.

74. What has a thousand eyes and no mouth?

Ans. A sifter.

75. The whole world full
And can't catch a cup full.

Ans. Sunshine.

76. What turns but doesn't move?

Ans. Milk.

77. What is it that goes when the wagon goes, stops when the wagon
stops, isn't any good, but the wagon can't get along without it?

Ans. The squeak.

78. What is it that gallops down the road on its head?

Ans. A horseshoe nail.

79. Runs and runs and never walks,
Great long tongue and never talks.

Ans. Wagon.

80. What do lawyers do when they die?

Ans. They lie still.

81. What has two heads and one body?

Ans. A barrel.

82. What goes all the way round the house and doesn't make a track?
Ans. The wind.

83. What is it that is too much for one, enough for two, and nothing at all for three.
Ans. A secret.

84. What tongue goes to the creek but never drinks?
Ans. A wagon-tongue.

85. It runs all day and never gets tired.
Ans. A river.

86. Hippety hop upstairs, hippety hop downstairs;
If you don't watch out, hippety hop will bite you.
Ans. A wasp.

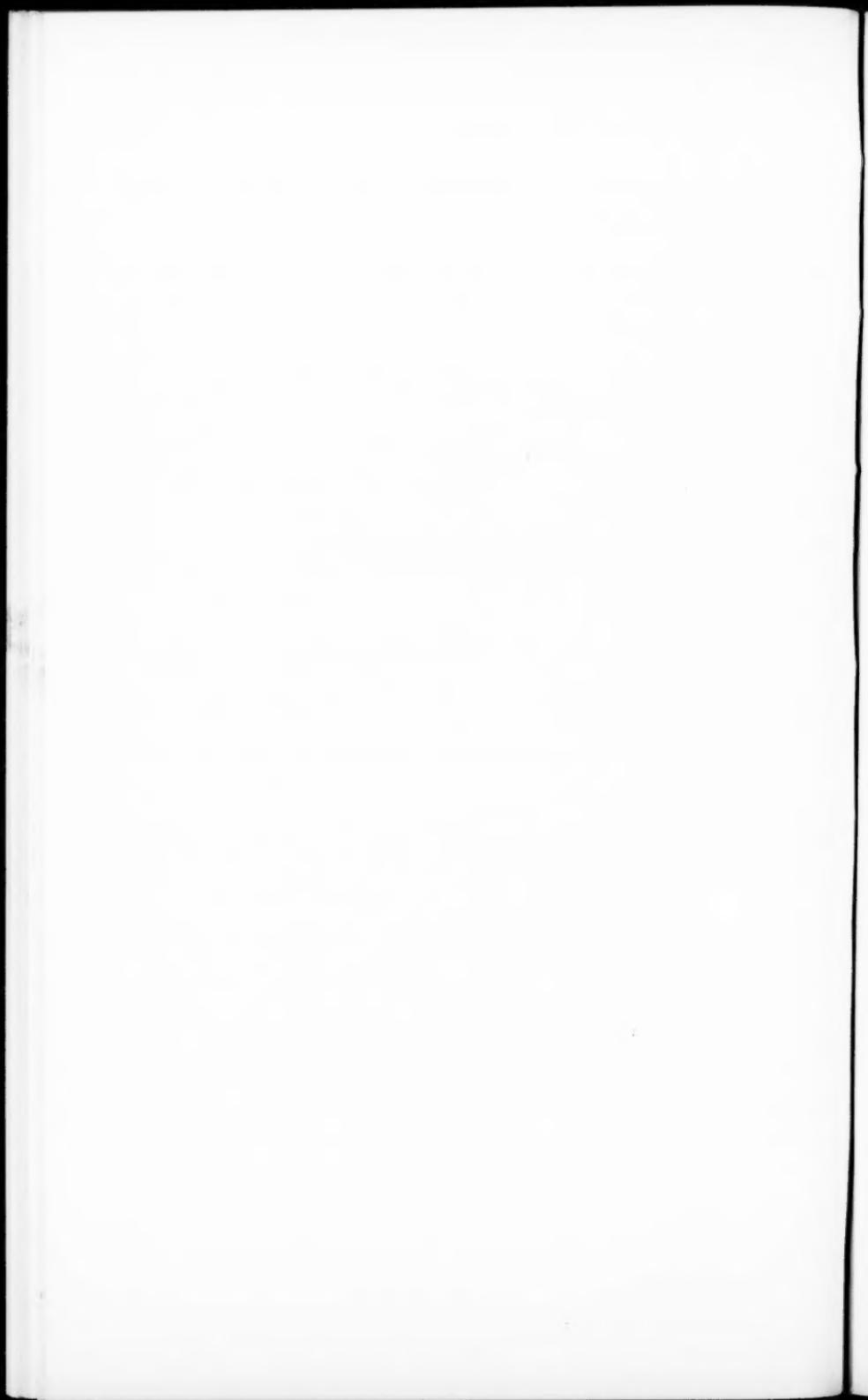
87. What is the difference between an old dime and a new copper cent?
Ans. Nine cents.

88. What's of no use to you and yet it is always with you?
Ans. Your shadow.

89. In marble halls as white as milk,
Lined with a skin as soft as silk,
Within a fountain crystal clear
A golden apple doth appear;
No doors there are to this stronghold,
Yet thieves break in and steal the gold.
Ans. An egg.

90. What goes up white and comes down yellow?
Ans. An egg.

91. Your mother had a child, which was neither your sister nor your brother. Who was it?
Ans. Yourself.



BOOK REVIEWS

FOLKLORE IN RECENT MAINE BOOKS, II

by

B. J. Whiting

Ridge Runner: The Story of a Maine Woodsman, by Gerald Averill. Philadelphia and New York, 1948. J. B. Lippincott Company. 217. \$2.75; *Country Neighborhood*, by Elizabeth Coatsworth. New York, 1944. Macmillan Company. 181. \$2.50; *Maine Ways*, by Elizabeth Coatsworth. New York, 1947. Macmillan Company. 213. \$2.75; *Yankee Coast*, by Robert P. Tristram Coffin. New York, 1947. Macmillan Company. 333. \$4.00; *Old John Neptune and Other Maine Indian Shamans*, by Fannie Hardy Eckstorm. Portland, 1945. Southworth-Anthoensen Press. xii+209. \$5.50; *The House That Jacob Built*, by John Gould. New York, 1947. William Morrow & Company. 256. \$2.75; *Yankee Drummer*, by R. E. Gould. New York, 1947. Whittlesey House. 236. \$2.50; *Maine Charm String*, by Elinor Graham. New York, 1946. Macmillan Company. 231. \$2.50; *Pine, Potatoes and People, the Story of Aroostook*, by Helen Hamlin. New York, 1948. W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. 238. \$3.00; *Saint Croix, The Sentinel River*, by Guy Murchie. New York, 1947. Duell, Sloan and Pearce. xx+281. \$3.50; *Along the Maine Coast*, Pictured by W. N. Wilson, Text by Dorothy Mitchell, New York, 1947. Whittlesey House. 97. \$3.50.

As this paper is not a review of the orthodox variety in which timeliness is all, or almost all, it includes several books which antedate the publication of the first survey of "Folklore in Recent Maine Books."¹ The number of books which continue to appear from the State of Maine² indicates a vitality there which must surprise those who take Mr. Toynbee's strictures at their face value.³

¹ SFQ, XI. (1947), 149-157.

² Maine people are proud of their designation "State," and with good reason, since it sprang from a sound New England virtue. The Convention originally intended the title to be "Commonwealth of Maine," but "State" was substituted by a vote of 119 to 113 "on account of the saving of time and expense in writing and printing." A further suggested change, that of "Maine" to "Ai" (the Canaanite city which Joshua [viii, 28] made "a heap forever, even a desolation"), did not prevail, despite the obvious economy. See Fannie S. Chase, *Wiscasset in Pownalborough* (Wiscasset, 1941), pp. 532-533.

³ Not all books with settings in Maine are included, because some deal so exclusively with the activities of their authors that almost no folklore appears. Such, for examples, are Louise Dickinson Rich's *We Took to the Woods* (1944) and *Happy the Land* (1946), and Elizabeth Foster's *The Islanders* (1946). The nearest approach to folklore in the last is the following: "Although Paul Bunyan is part of the folklore of the Middle West, his tall tales still linger in the Eastern lumber camps, where a lot of them had their origin. Ned (a trapper) used to spin these yarns nightly, adding several of his own invention which were even wilder than the original Bunyan. He used to tell one about a tame trout

The books noticed here are similar in nature to those treated in the earlier review, indeed there are repeats by the Goulds, except that this time no local history appears, although there are occasional references to examples of that genre.⁴ The reader must be reminded, as before, that these books were not written by or for folklorists and that the things which interest us particularly are generally inserted by accident rather than design.

Gerald Averill, author of *Ridge Runner*, was born and brought up in the town of Frankfort on the Penobscot River about half way between Bangor and the Bay. From high school he went into the North Woods to work as a clerk in the lumber camps. After the first World War he did a number of things, until in 1933 he became a game warden, a position which he relinquished as the result of a severe illness in 1946. He had published articles for several years before this, and *Ridge Runner*, an informal autobiography, was written during what might have been his convalescence. *Ridge Runner* is well written in a simple, unpretentious way, and though it contains, perhaps happily, less home-spun philosophy than some of its reviewers have suggested, it is a genuine book, which is no mean praise. The opening pages, which describe Grandfather filling and lighting his pipe, constitute an extraordinarily vivid piece of writing. Grandfather's story (pp. 29-35) of the white shark and its horrid fate is almost a *Moby Dick* in miniature. Gerald's account (p. 51) of how he stopped eating eels after seeing a hoard of them come "squirming and hustling out of the bloated carcass" of a drowned horse is doubtless true, but it verges on folklore if we compare it with the story, heard in Massachusetts, of the man who said that "he kind of lost his taste for eels after father died." It seems that father, already half-seas over, had fallen into a small estuary and when beached, two days later, was found to have his body cavity filled with a peck of well-fed, lively eels. Here it may be noted that Mr. Averill is more realistic than many of our Maine writers, in whose Land of Glory there is no place for decaying horses. Consider how he came upon a bear: "There was a dead sow there—a grey-green putrescent mass

which strained his listeners' credulity to the breaking point and was very funny, but too long to print here" (p. 179). One can love flowers and still regret that Mrs. Foster, who could devote thirty pages to a garden, had no room for the tame trout, but see R. M. Dorson, *Jonathan Draws the Long Bow* (Cambridge, Mass., 1946), pp. 120-121; a recent account of the tame trout, as told by Ralph McAllister of Center Lovell, Maine, to Haydn S. Pearson, appeared in the *Boston Herald*, June 26, 1947, p. 32. Mr. McAllister had also been charged by the rare horned rabbit and attacked by the hell-hopping mosquitoes which "are about as big as a turkey buzzard," "hibernate in caves and come out in the spring about town meeting time. They got a bill on 'em about a foot long." He only escaped by crawling under a copper kettle in which he was boiling off maple sap and bending over the bills as they came through the metal. Nine of the hell-hoppers flew off with the kettle.

* The writer is engaged in an examination of folklore elements embedded in Maine local histories, the results of which should appear in the course of several years.

of decomposed flesh and viscera into which an enormous bear had thrust its head clean to its ears. It was feeding voraciously, filling its lean hulk with that crawling, stinking mess; slobbering and gobbling like a hog in a tub of swill" (pp. 160-161). Or note the painfully comic tale of how the author was forced to take the head and cape off a ripe moose (pp. 180-183), a story which illustrates a fairly prevalent type of Maine humor. There is realism, too, in Mr. Averill's picture of life in the lumber camps (pp. 88f.): "The younger men who followed the camps and rivers had just two thoughts in mind and just two topics of conversation—rum and women. You might hunt the world over and fail to find a breed to compare with them in sheer blasphemy, profanity, lechery and drunkenness. Every other spoken word was an oath or an obscenity, and most of them had a fund of anecdotes and foul ditties that they told or droned out in doubtful melody around the evening fires. Some of these are funny but unprintable, and the favorites are so obscene there is no point in them—no rhyme or anything else to appeal to one's sense of humor, just a mass of filthy words" (pp. 94-95). But there is folk humor even in the realism: "One man swore that he took three Great Northern lice over onto the Katahdin Pulp and Paper outfit, over in the East Branch country, and these kept the East Branchers off him all winter. He said there were some terrible lice fights that went on clear up into his head and whiskers, but the ones he brought with him repelled all boarders and all he had when he left in the spring were the same three. He knew they were the same ones because they had 'G.N.P.' stamped on their backs" (p. 96). The story of Esau Kant and the gorbie or Canada Jay (pp. 115-129) is a true folk-tale, full of cruelty, horror and the supernatural, and it is no over-zealous search for parallels which makes us see in Kant an unredeemed Ancient Mariner. There are some bits of tobacco lore (pp. 7-8, 11), an attractive and not too improbable theory of the part played by rum in the building of stone walls (p. 55), some of the conventional liar stories (pp. 69-74), the folklore of gonorrhea (pp. 96-97), and an admirable transcript of the artless prattle of one of the miracle women who take ten minutes off from their washing to shoot a deer (pp. 189-191).

Elizabeth Coatsworth (Mrs. Henry Beston), though not a native of Maine, has spent a considerable portion of many years on a farm near Damariscotta. Miss Coatsworth, obviously a perceptive person, won the friendship and confidence of her neighbors, and has distilled the results of her listening and observation into two volumes of thoroughly charming, if usually slight, sketches. *Country Neighborhood* contains two witches (pp. 5-7, 61-62), the second a wind-seller, a wood haunted by a peddler and his murderer (pp. 34-36), a widow who threw her husband's Bible, carpet slippers and cat into the sea where he had drowned (p. 66), a child marked by a seal (p. 93), another by a mouse (pp. 94-95), and a third by a snake (pp. 95-96), some legends of Molly Molasses (pp. 137-139) (see Mrs. Eckstorm's *Old John Neptune* below), others of Pamola of Katahdin

(pp. 145-148), especially the highly non-Indian account of his union with a Detroit school teacher, and a couple of work rhymes (p. 178) (cf. *American Speech*, XX [1945], 178-183). Among minor superstitions are ways to make it safe for elderly people to move into a new house (p. 10), martins who deserted their box after an old man who liked them died (p. 75), weather omens (p. 94), and bad luck Fridays (pp. 102-103). In *Maine Ways* we read of charivaris (pp. 58-59) which, contrary to Miss Coatsworth's impression, are not always a wholly friendly gesture,⁵ an Indian legend of young Katahdin (pp. 59-62), really the original of the burlesque episode told of Pamola in *Country Neighborhood*, the Pukwudgies (p. 66), who are a little too like Indian Pucks in actions as well as name, gypsies (pp. 112-114), turning one's boots upside down to drive away cramps in the legs (p. 132), a folk version of the girl who was killed on Maiden Cliff in the Camden hills (p. 140), persistence of old words and phrases (pp. 158-159), that one must fish off the right side of a dory "because Jesus had so commanded the disciples" (p. 164), a haunted house (pp. 190-192), witches, female and male (pp. 197-198), local arts, such as painting, carving and whittling (pp. 92-100), and weather lore (pp. 20, 21, 54). Miss Coatsworth is aware of the value of the traditions which she records, although she may underestimate them slightly: "Compared to that of most countries, our native folklore is thin; it has had only a little over three hundred years in which to accumulate. Behind it lies the culture of the Indians, seen by us almost entirely in two dimensions. . . . Our American tradition is comparatively young; but it has its own tart flavor, its dignities, its poignancies, and its sudden contrasts" (pp. 212-213). One of Miss Coatsworth's stories, illustrates, perhaps unconsciously, one sudden contrast in the Yankee spirit. A farmer had a new team; he also had a father. The father was thrown from a hay rack and killed: "His son was left heavy-hearted at the accident, with all the work to do, and twelve cows to milk. The team had to be given up" (p. 41).⁶

In *Yankee Coast*, Professor R. P. Tristram Coffin continues his slightly incestuous love affair with the State of Maine. Professor Coffin's dithyrambs are hardly characteristic; Maine people in general,

⁵ For an earlier (1851) lack of appreciation on the part of the serenaded, see David Noyes, *The History of Norway* (Norway, Maine, 1852), p. 170: "A number of young men met for the purpose of 'serenading' a party who had been recently married. In the midst of the performance, some one in the house discharged a gun, loaded with shot and peas, at the crowd. The charge principally took effect upon the person of a young man named Foster, a son of Capt. Jeremiah Foster, injuring him severely, and it was at the time feared fatally. . . . Much excitement existed at the time, especially against the individual who was supposed to have fired the gun. This 'serenading' is not very commendable, but yet it is one of the fashionable follies of the present day; and a person of common sense and human feelings can plead no excuse for so wanton and wicked an act as firing into an indiscriminate crowd of men and boys."

⁶ Another Maine story, not told by Miss Coatsworth, admirably shows how first things come first. A man had all too good reason to believe that his brother was having an affair with his wife. When asked why he did not interfere, he replied simply, "What can I do? I get my water off his land."

if not exactly modest, are usually self-restrained, often consciously so, and with them litotes is more effective than rhapsody. For Professor Coffin, Maine is the finest of states, indeed the last home of Americanism; in Maine only the coastal area really counts and of the coastal area the transcendent stretch is along Casco—"My Casco"—Bay; even Casco can be narrowed down to two or three islands. The conclusion of Professor Coffin's discussion of why one says *down* to Maine is reasonably typical of his attitude: "So *down* we go. To life *up* our eyes and our lives! By golly! it ought to be *up*" (pp. 171-172). Professor Coffin's enthusiasm is a little embarrassing to his fellow State-of-Mainers. A happier touch is in one of the sketches of Artemus Ward (Charles F. Browne): In an Oregon barroom a number of men "in a state of strong drink" extoll their native states. "'And I,' said a yellow-haired and swallow-faced man, who was not of the party at all, and who had been quietly smoking a short black pipe by the fire during their magnificent conversation—'And I was born in the garden-spot of America.'

"Where is that?" they said.

"'Skowhegan, Maine!' he replied; 'kin I sell you a razor strop?'" (*The Complete Works of Artemus Ward* [New York, 1898], p. 283). Browne, of course, was born in inland Maine. The superlatives in *Yankee Coast* leave little room for folklore. There is a bit of weatherlore (p. 27), the cooked woodchuck joke (see R. Gould below) applied here to tuna (p. 55), a reference to the survival of Child ballads in Maine (p. 62), a list of dialect words⁷ and proverbs of what Professor Coffin calls the "Mountain Jims" (p. 63), most of which are in more general use, a good story of a haunted house (pp. 78-85), mention of the drummer boy's ghost at Castine (p. 194) (cf. George A. Wheeler, *History of Castine, Penobscot, and Brooksville, Maine* [Bangor, 1875] p. 324), and allusions to Captain Kidd and to the phantom ship (p. 182).

The late Mrs. Eckstorm's *Old John Neptune and Other Maine Indian Shamans* is an account of John Neptune (1767-1865), lieutenant governor of the Penobscots for a half century, and, to a lesser degree, of his redoubtable mistress and ally, Mary Nicola, better known as Molly Molasses.⁸ Interwoven with biography is the story of the party feuds of the Penobscots in the nineteenth century, when the Indians were almost as bitter politicians as were their white neighbors. Mrs. Eckstorm's statements come in part from careful research, but also, and more vividly, from over a century of family association with the Indians, a connection which began when her grandparents moved to Brewer in 1835. For students of folklore, the

⁷ *Tomalley* is said to be a word "our ancestors spoke in Chaucer's England," though it is not recorded before 1666 and is quite probably of American origin.

⁸ Among whites Molly Molasses's memory is greener than that of either Neptune or even the great chief Joseph Orono. As a small boy I searched fruitlessly for arrowheads on the reputed site of one of Molly's camps in Northport. For a story of Molly, see Fannie S. Chase, *Wiscasset in Pownalborough (Wiscasset, 1941)*, pp. 24-25.

most fascinating portions of the book are those which deal with the survival of shamanism (pp. 95-110) among the Christian Penobscots. Clearly John Neptune and some of his legitimate descendants enjoyed the reputation of supernatural powers (pp. 26-30, 33, 35, 36-37 [Neptune and the newts]), but unfortunately Mrs. Eckstorm can find no concrete evidence of his practice of magic (pp. 178, 181-189, esp. 184). Even his greatest supposed exploit, the fight with the *wiwillamecq'* (pp. 39-48), was, as Mrs. Eckstorm shows (pp. 47-48, 55-60, 66, 89-95) originally told of a Passamaquoddy Neptune. Incidentally, Mrs. Eckstorm's suggestion that the fearful but highly indefinite *wiwillamecq'* represents a folk transfiguration of a Giant Squid (pp. 92-95) is more interesting than convincing.

The House That Jacob Built, by Mr. John Gould, is really a continuation of *Farmer Takes a Wife* (cf. SFQ, XI [1947], 150-151). The house to which Mr. Gould took his wife burned down and the present volume tells how a new one was built, on the outside identical with the original, but filled with many a modern gadget. Still and all, there is a wood-burning range, for nothing else, in Mr. Gould's opinion, will cook baked beans properly (pp. 52-53).⁹ Like its predecessor, *The House* is embellished with family anecdotes, but unfortunately the lode is running a little thin. There is a tall tale about a stove with so strong a draft that it carried the stove itself to the ceiling (pp. 54-55),¹⁰ and still another of a slide on a circular saw (pp. 29-31). How Great-Grandfather would chop all the trees on a hillside nearly through and then bring them down at once by felling one tree, the "driver," when the wind was right (pp. 26-27), sounds like a tall tale, but seems to have been a not uncommon practice.¹¹ The account of water witching—Grandmother was a water witch and taught the Rickers how to bring in Poland Spring—is good (pp. 99-103),¹² and Grandfather's method of making cider (pp. 33-38) is worth recording at a time when the art seems to be dying.¹³ Anyone

⁹ Most books about Maine devote considerable space to baked beans and their preparation. Sooner or later someone must write a synthetic article on the ritual of the baked bean; it is already assuming folklore proportions, and can easily be associated with the Death and Resurrection of a Vegetation Divinity. Incidentally in Maine they are called *bake'beans*, just as yeast bread is *yeas'bread*, or even *eas'bread*; indeed, I have heard a child admonished to speak correctly and say *east bread* rather than *eas'*.

¹⁰ A variant is that a mason, when asked if a fire-place he was building would have an adequate draft, replied: "The last place I put up a chimney like this, they lost the cat."

¹¹ Cf. Lyndon Oak, *History of Garland, Maine* (Dover, 1912), p. 148; G. T. Ridlon, Sr., *Saco Valley Settlements and Families* (Portland, 1895), pp. 41-42; John L. Sibley, *A History of the Town of Union, in the County of Lincoln, Maine* (Boston, 1851), p. 98.

¹² For another account of water divining in Maine, see Margaret H. Shea, *Tavern in the Town* (New York, 1948), pp. 131-142.

¹³ Cider in Maine means hard cider; before fermentation it is only for children or as a purge. The man who made the best cider I ever drank did as Grandfather did, except that he added a small cloth bag of corn meal and a piece of beefsteak weighing a pound and a half. Whatever the effect of the meal and meat the cider was good. Apples, oddly enough, have a lot to do with the quality of cider; the man who wants good cider doesn't use windfalls and culls.

who attended many Maine country auctions twenty or thirty years ago will enjoy the account of what Mr. Gould calls "the old thunder-jug routine" (p. 44). I once was at the auction of the effects of a family which had accumulated through the years an even twenty pieces of chamber pottery, many ornate enough for royalty. The auctioneer had arranged them neatly about his stand and, here was his virtuosity, he employed a different periphrasis in offering each one. Most of them went to summer people who, after the ice was broken, bid spiritedly.¹⁴ One passage must be quoted, if only for the challenge with which it ends.

True as that story turned out to be, Grandfather was not above embellishing his war stories, and could twist a cow's tale as well as the next one. These, he never expected anyone to believe. Such as the old one that a general rode up on a white horse—it was always a white horse in Grandfather's stories—and cried out, "Stop shooting, Thomas, you've killed enough." As far as I can learn every old soldier told that story, and it is possibly an index by which scholarly dissec tors can isolate the virulent germ of Yankee humor. For my money it combines all seven types of humor in one, besides containing the salient properties of a perfectly intelligent and non-humorous remark. I think it is such an essay at humor that not above two or three differing types of humanity have ever tried anything like it, and it is all the more remarkable therefore that it had a tremendous vogue in this immediate vicinity. The success of the story, probably it would be a gag today, lay mostly in the fact that Grandfather told it chiefly so Grandmother would shush him. In this way it became a family by-word, and you won't be around our place long before somebody says, "stop shooting, you've killed enough!" with reference to some such ordinary work as shelling peas or paring apples. I leave further consideration to the professors (pp. 154-155).

A professor, pedantic as usual, must substitute "American" for "Yankee," since he first heard the story told by the late President John S. Bryan of the College of William and Mary concerning General R. E. Lee and a Confederate private named John R. Dell, or something akin to that. The Southern version, naturally, was more eloquent, and in it Lee cried out: "Cease fire, John R. Dell, my soul is sick with slaughter!"

If Mr. John Gould's new book is somewhat disappointing, the family still comes out even, for Mr. Ralph Gould's *Yankee Drummer* is even better than his earlier *Yankee Storekeeper* (cf. *SFQ*, XI [1947], 151-152). Selling farm machinery is no more interesting in itself, perhaps, than running a country store, but Mr. Gould's travels, which took him even into Vermont, bring out some of his best stories. He isn't bad at generalizations. Once he took a good

¹⁴ One is reminded of the Waldo County story of the sheriff, the chamberpot, and the concealed evidence for single sale, but despite the parallel to "The Purloined Letter," there are limits even to a reviewer's digressions.

close look at the Maine legislature in session: "as unenterprising-looking a bunch of near idiots as you could pick in a day's drive" (p. 27). He knows the difference between Maine and Vermont:

Vermonters are a different race from Maine folk, and it took me a long while to get accustomed to them. The Vermonters who originally came up the Connecticut River were largely of Scottish or Irish descent and were farmers by training and instinct. The down-Easters were anything else. They were descended from lumberjacks, shipbuilders, hunters, fishermen, sailors, maybe pirates, but never farmers, and they never took to farming naturally. Most of them owned a farm, but this was just a place to leave the family while they were engaged in more interesting pursuits. Their differing points of view are well expressed in the old saw that a Vermont farmer sells all he can and eats what he can't sell, while a Maine farmer eats all he can and sells what he can't eat.

Each of these states speaks its own language. If you don't believe me, listen to a little Vermont girl say, "Gertie, see the little bird fly over the church," then ask a Maine girl to say it. The Vermont girl will roll her *r*'s as broadly as any Irishman. She also says "harg" and "darg." The down-Easter, although he has few peculiarities of pronunciation, can be spotted anywhere by his picturesque expressions, most of which are adaptations of seafaring terms. I remember my old aunt, who never went to sea but was as salty as any clipper captain that ever lived, calling to Mother, "This child has got into the molasses and daubed himself from stem to gudgeon," or if it wasn't "from stem to gudgeon" it was "from clew to earing" (pp. 111-112).¹⁵

For deliberate chicanery I would choose a Vermonter every time, but for plain and fancy lying for the joy of it, I would choose a man from Maine. The down-Easters have it in their blood. When their ancestors returned from far voyages, their stories of adventure excited the admiration of their stay-at-home neighbors, and pretty soon some man whose most exciting moment had been when he was kicked by a cow began to imagine himself as the hero of encounters with savages and wild animals. From thinking about it, he began to talk about it, and soon the state developed a race of tall liars that can't be equalled (p. 116).

Mr. Gould distinguishes between business and pleasure so far as lying goes:

This advertising was a revelation to me, for this big concern was using the very same sales methods that we Maine Yankees have always used—only the other way around. We both stick to the truth—after all, why shouldn't we? I never could see why it is necessary to

¹⁵ For an earlier Maine comment on the dialect of Vermont, see G. T. Ridlon, Sr., *Saco Valley Settlements and Families* (Portland, 1895), p. 174: "His dialect was strongly tinctured with the peculiar flat pronunciation and long-drawn accent which originated in northern New York and insinuated itself, like a great, thin-edged wedge, into nearly every part of Vermont."

tell a lie when the truth can be just as misleading—only this Western firm went in for grandiose visions, while we stick to understatement (p. 32).

There is a great temptation to repeat Mr. Gould's stories, for example, Bill Smart's fishing expedition, with the lengthy buildup followed by the sharp folk ending: "The critter came out, grabbed the bait, and started back under the log. Bill gave a hell of a yank—but he never got a goddamn thing" (pp. 12-13). Or the traditional come-uppance which the nitwit boy gave the miller (p. 18). Or the account of the Indian Chief Sabattus who, when a prankish white offered him all the rum he could carry in a bushel basket, waited until January when he dipped the basket in and out of water until it froze to a shell of ice. Again, asked for three wishes, Sabattus replied, "I would have that pond all rum and I would have that mountain all sugar." . . . After thinking a long while, he said for his third wish, "And then I would have some more rum" (p. 36). Or the time that Mr. Gould narrowly escaped death in a buggy wreck and was picked up by a farmer: "I was so shaken that I never once thought of trying to sell him a spreader" (p. 41). One seldom sees the effect of imminent death upon even a Yankee described so succinctly, indeed movingly. Or the bear who was smart enough to move the traps which Uncle Bijah Luce had set for him to a place where Bijah himself would step into them (pp. 46-47). Or the definition of an old-fashioned winter: "Three days snow, three days blow, and three days colder'n hell" (p. 53). Or the Canuck's elaborate recipe for cooking sculpin, with the punch line, "An' den . . . you throw him away. She's no damn' good." Likewise with woodchuck: "You skin him an' fix him all up nice an' you parboil a while to take hout de strong taste, an' den you put him in hoven an' bake him for 'bout two hours. Me, I just as soon have chicken" (p. 63). Another version of this is of a French Canadian lumber-camp cook who ended instructions for boiling bear steak, "I'd as soon have lamb as him."¹⁵ Or the old theme of the indignant cuckold, here told of a French Canadian who, leaving his wife at home with his Swedish lumberjack roomer, had the door slammed in his face when he came back unexpectedly for an umbrella: "Hi ain't speak to him after dat" (pp. 68-69). Or Gideon's geese who didn't know any more than to swim "across a pond to get a drink of water" (p. 79). Or the boy from Boston, visiting in Vermont, who was given a secret receipt for fox bait: "One cat, one skunk, and one large sucker (a fish), all to be cut up into small pieces and put in a gallon jug, the mouth of which should be covered with a piece of cheesecloth. The whole is put away in a safe place to ripen. The boy told me his jugful had been ripening ever since early spring."

¹⁵ That not even all the pioneers were fond of fried bear is proved by a story, in which bear is served as pork, told by Lyndon Oak, *History of Garland, Maine* (Dover, 1912), pp. 55-56. One may feel more sympathy for Dr. Jacob Roberts who was considerably upset when he learned that what he had eaten as "a fine roast of lamb" was in reality "plain skunk browned to a turn" (Seth W. Norwood, *Sketches of Brooks History* [Dover, N. H., 1935], p. 103).

The boy's uncle, whom Mr. Gould didn't like, was inadvertently baptised with the bait: "The teamster said he had hauled timber in Maine where cussing is cussing, but he had never heard anything like this. He laughed until he didn't have any breath left, then he went outside and barked like a fox. That started the old man all over again" (pp. 96-97). Or Alec Marsh, the Aroostook County lumber-camp cook, who should have been, and perhaps was, with Paul Bunyan (p. 117). Or the quill-shooting porcupines, the side-hill ranger, and the screaming swamp swogon (pp. 229-230). *Yankee Drummer*, without appearing to try, gives a better picture of Northern New England and its folk than do most more self-conscious efforts.

Maine Charm String has a folklore theme. The author, Mrs. Graham, is an out-of-stater, who tries to pretend that she took up button collecting in order to become more intimate with her neighbors. Obviously, however, this is mere rationalization, and she got badly bitten by the button bug. Susceptible readers, indeed, should be warned that the disease is highly infectious and guard themselves accordingly. A charm-string is a good thing with which to start off a button collection: "Unless you are moved by the thought of a young girl stringing fashion and history, color and design on one cord, with love as the motivating force, you will not be interested in a complete description of a charm string. The story was that, by the time you had strung nine hundred and ninety-nine old buttons on a string, your true love would appear. The charm didn't always work. Of the four charm strings that I have received as a gift, or have bought, three were the work of maiden ladies" (p. 100). Mrs. Graham makes it obvious that much folk-history, though hardly restricted to Maine, is bound up in the lore of buttons. Over and above buttons, she gives some good sketches and vignettes and proves herself an acute and perceptive, if tolerant, observer. "I know that there is dirt and disorder in Maine, things crooked as well as straight. I've seen poverty, disease, and insanity. I've seen people sitting on what amounts to a dungheap, with such self-righteous satisfaction that it makes me want to weep. That is life as it must express itself everywhere. Maine is no exception to the rule" (p. 65). She sums up one aspect of Maine admirably: "It is wise and tolerant, and it leaves you alone. You can have a 'housekeeper,'¹⁷ and your morals can be in question; but, as long as you are kind, people are kind. A man can get publicly drunk and say pieces of words; but, although the people will disapprove of him, they will not pillory him or run him out of town. He will be laughed at or pitied, or passed over with no comment. Maine rural communities, even when vice lurks in or around the barn, are in most cases generous-minded. . . . It would be foolish to claim that all the people of Maine are generous-minded. There is narrowness and bigotry in individuals, and sometimes an unbearable self-satisfaction to be found in the virtuous; but one is

¹⁷ The status of a housekeeper is all too often unambiguous. A widower advertised in a Maine weekly not long ago for one; among the advantages of the position he listed, with pleasant candor: "Own room."

privileged to meet some very remarkable characters" (pp. 150-151).¹⁸

Like Gaul, Aroostook County is divided into three parts—Western Aroostook or the forest land, Northern Aroostook or the "French Country," and Central and Southern Aroostook or the potato fields. Mrs. Hamlin's *Pine, Potatoes and People* would be of greater interest to the folklorist if she had put more stress on her third P, and especially if she had told more about the customs and beliefs of the Acadians. Everyone knows about the Acadians who were deported to Louisiana, but few have heard of the group which avoided the farther exile and settled in the St. John's Valley in 1757, where they remained pretty much isolated until the second decade of the next century when the Yankees began to move into Aroostook. Mrs. Hamlin herself has Acadian blood and knows the people well, but while her account is historically satisfying (pp. 16-17, 70-84), she tells regrettably little of their lore. She holds the "Jumping Frenchman" to be a slanderous myth (pp. 79-81), though she tells stories to illustrate the phenomenon. Perhaps she is right, but the belief is too widely held to be eradicated; as a boy I heard men returned from a winter in the lumber camps tell the tale with a wealth of circumstantial and personal detail. "Grandpa Austin had the reputation for being the biggest and best liar in Aroostook County. As a story teller, Frank Austin had few equals" (p. 11). He also "wrote long ballad poems and stories about logging and the woods" (p. 13), but none of the ballads are given and few of the stories. One thoroughly medieval tale is of the woods cook who murdered a scaler and buried him along with the usual beef and deer bones under the kitchen table (p. 13).¹⁹ When she writes of a singer of "Come all ye's" (pp. 124-125), she names two—"The Bogan Brook line," and "The Jam on Garry's Rock,"—but quotes none. We find the thoroughly folklore theme of the woman who worked as a logger all winter only to reveal her identity and sex in

¹⁸ An earlier book by Mrs. Graham, *Our Way Down East* (New York, 1943), contains even less specific folklore than *Maine Charm String*, but there are two amusing examples of a newcomer's impressions of the local speech (see pp. 44-45, 142).

¹⁹ Mrs. Hamlin told the same story in more and varying detail—the murderer was another scaler, the cook only a witness, and with corncobs rather than animal bones—in her earlier *Nine Mile Bridge* (New York, 1945), p. 38. Other folklore bits in *Nine Mile Bridge* include some quotations from French Canadian ballads (pp. 24-26), an illiterate French Canadian story teller who told the stories of Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty (pp. 43-44), bed bug tall tales (p. 32); cf. Gerald Averill, above), the Paul Bunyan yarn of the frying pan so big that the cookies greased it by skating about with salt pork tied to their feet (p. 43), and a couple of Indian legends (pp. 74-75, 128). "The queerest one I ever heard was the old French Canadian superstition that piercing the ear lobes, as if for earrings, will cure sore or weak eyes" (p. 48). In my father's boyhood in the 1860's it was not unusual for elderly men, especially if they had been sailors, to wear gold earrings to strengthen their eyes. I knew a very old man thirty-five years ago who still had the holes, though he had ceased to wear the rings. A glance at the treatments prescribed for diseases of the eyes in such a popular work as R. V. Pierce's *The People's Common Sense Medical Adviser in Plain English; or Medicine Simplified* (12th ed., 240th thousand, Buffalo, N. Y., 1883) suggests strongly that gold earrings were less harmful than more "scientific" remedies.

the spring (p. 37). In general, Mrs. Hamlin's woodsmen are more genteel than those with whom Mr. Averill came in contact.²⁰ Occasionally (e.g., p. 49) a local superstition is mentioned, and there are some good stories of the fabulous Buber family; Dave Buber's father, for example, complained that the boy was so lazy that "when it came time for him to lug something along, all he took with him was the cookstove and grindstone" (pp. 134-135). It took a whole calf skin to make Dave a pair of boots. A chapter is devoted to the Indians (pp. 20-29) and some of their legends (pp. 22-23, 25-26) and weather lore (p. 29) are recorded. As a former school teacher, Mrs. Hamlin is interested in the speech of the country: "The diction in Aroostook is better than elsewhere in Maine, and so is the grammar. . . . Aroostook people take great pains in pronouncing their words, especially rolling the r's. . . . It is a rarity to hear anyone say 'he ain't' and 'he don't' even though he may have come from some of the smallest back settlements. It is believed that some of the fanciest language ever heard emanated from this edge of nowhere. It is rarely profane, but every sentence and description is colored with it. It is never just 'hot,' but always 'hotter than the hinges of hell.' An outstanding individual is an 'awful rig.' Balky machinery is a 'hay wire affair.' A poor driver is a 'Frenchman.' You 'lug' things around; you don't carry them. 'Blue blazes, blue thunder, and blue lightning' describe the superlative in anything" (p. 18). The language is not perhaps as distinctive as Mrs. Hamlin thinks, and one may query if profanity is any rarer in Aroostook than elsewhere in the state; Grandpa Austin, for one, "could reel off some of the fanciest cuss words I have ever heard" (p. 12). For most people, "Aroostook" and "potato" are synonymous, and Mrs. Hamlin's chapters devoted to tubers are lively, informative and interesting. She takes "spud" to come from the initials of a British anti-potato association, The Society for the Prevention of Unwholesome Diet (p. 181), which is attractive, but not as likely as its derivation from a word for spade. Mrs. Hamlin's political history is a little shaky at times. She calls a man in politics in the 1830's "an individualist—a Democrat in the State of Maine" (p. 48). Like many others, she seems unaware that before the 1850's Maine was, on the whole, a Democratic state. Again she wonders if the fact that much of the French country is Democratic is due to "spite or pure cussedness or aloofness" (p. 115). The Acadians were Democrats when most of Maine was and being conservative remained so. Despite the paucity of folklore, *Pine, Potatoes and People* is a warm and engaging book.

Mr. Murchie's *St. Croix* is an account of events on or near the river which, flowing into Passamaquoddy Bay, separates Maine from New Brunswick. As a source for folklore the book suffers because of a too rigidly historical approach; as history it suffers from the author's occasional willingness, especially in the earlier portions, to accept

²⁰ Another more detailed, but perhaps too courteous, picture of a lumber camp is in G. T. Ridlon, *Saco Valley Settlements and Families* (Portland, 1895), pp. 206-230.

any printed work as an authority. There is an account of the Abenaki Indians (pp. 54-70) and of their legends (pp. 100-110), especially those of Glooskap. We read with interest that F. D. Roosevelt, who spent much of his youth at Campobello, made at fifteen an unsuccessful search for Captain Kidd's treasure (p. 243). Mr. Murchie, by the way, maintains a discreet silence on the various projects for harnessing the tides at Passamaquoddy. He gives a brief account of a St. Andrews witch whose curse temporarily postponed the launching of the *Black Swan* (p. 260), but in general Mr. Murchie pays too little attention to local legends and superstitions.

A rule easier to formulate than to explain seems to insist that the better the pictures in any book about Maine the duller the text. *Along the Maine Coast* contains admirable water colors and drawings by W. N. Wilson, but the description of a highly imaginary—for one thing, the weather was always good—walking trip from Kittery to Eastport is unhappily flat. The only folklore, incidental and probably unintentional, consists of flights of fancy, or plain errors, in historical statements. Thus: "Sir Ferdinando Gorges was a dashing, well-favored courtier at Queen Elizabeth's court, an associate of such figures of his day as Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Sir Walter Raleigh" (p. 6); "That all too briefly summarizes the history of the Maine settlers who were here when the Mayflower dropped anchor, and who were already launching a ship when the Puritans landed at Plymouth Rock" (p. 12); "We walk on to Cape Elizabeth. There are those who claim that Captain John Smith named the cape after Elizabeth, daughter of the King and Queen of Denmark. There are others who scoff at this notion and tell you he named it after Elizabeth, Queen of England. Captain Smith is in no position to be consulted, but knowing how jealous the Virgin Queen was of all honors she considered her due, we doubt very much if the canny captain would have incurred the royal wrath by diverting the title role from her" (p. 21); "Oddly enough, it was on this island [Peak's] that the tragic wreck of the schooner 'Helen Eliza' occurred in the great gale of 1869, which provided Longfellow with the basis for his poem 'The Wreck of the Hesperus'" (prophetically published in 1842) (p. 25). "An old woman, accused of being a witch, was haled before him, and the colonel (Buck, of Bucksport) summarily sent her to the stake" (p. 65); "When Britain passed the hated Embargo Act of 1807, prohibiting commerce between the United States and any other nation, smuggling became a thriving, exciting business" (p. 92).

Harvard University

Wisconsin Is My Doorstep, by Robert E. Gard, Decorations by Frank Utpatel. Longmans, Green, and Company, New York, London, and Toronto, 1948. xv, 194. \$3.50.

In his latest collection of yarns, *Wisconsin Is My Doorstep*, Robert E. Gard, author of *Johnny Chinook*, demonstrates his crea-

tive use of folklore material for radio drama, by presenting a series of incidents from the Wisconsin scene, varying from the lumberjack ballad with its native background, to Civil War episode, the tall tale, weather lore, a Great Lakes shipwreck, and a miracle. The reader finds himself listening to the facile dialogue of Gard's Wisconsin men and women; he loses consciousness of the written word. This is high art in radio writing, and can well serve as a guide to folklorists seeking new fields of expression, or to radio dramatists needing a fresh, authentic approach to the American scene.

For two years Mr. Gard has been the director of the Wisconsin Idea Theater, a state-wide project which has resulted in the collection of folk history and folklore and its interpretation on radio programs.

Wisconsin Is My Doorstep is not a collection of folklore. It is poetic drama with the homey flavor of pumpernickel rye spread thick with butter; if a whiff of oleomargarine seeps into the context here and there, it is forgotten in the reader's satisfaction with the whole.

Aili K. Johnson

Flint, Michigan

Spooks of the Valley, by Louis C. Jones. Illustrated by Erwin Austin. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 1948. iv, 111. \$2.50.

No adult should attempt to review a juvenile book without subjecting it to juvenile criticism. It gave this reviewer a certain satisfaction to find a twelve year old with a preference for comic books, and to leave *Spooks of the Valley* within easy reach. Less than two hours later he closed the book with a delighted shiver. "Boy, that's a swell story! Gave me goose pimples! Goose pimples all over!"

Dr. Louis C. Jones presents his spooks in realistic fashion. His young heroes, Joe and Pete, guided by a gentle ghost, George the Peddler, encounter legendary Upper Hudson figures: Captain Kidd, the Leeds ghosts, Henry Hudson, Aaron Burr, and a particularly horrifying specter, Aunt Sally. Many familiar ghost tales are woven into Joe's and Pete's adventures in easy, conversational style.

The adult reader is a little shocked, however, by the reality of the ghosts. Spooks are fascinating; they add variety to the commonplace, but one feels they should remain ethereal. Healthy flesh and blood boys digging in woodpiles for old skeletons and attending spook receptions are just a little too reminiscent of the half witted boy in Upper Michigan who found a body with a decapitated head in an old basement. He played Indian with the head for a couple of days, and finally left it on a woodpile for a horrified coroner to view.*

* An analyst from New York was summoned. He cleared up the mystery by pronouncing the body that of an Oriental woman. The veins and arteries were injected with fluids, indicating that the cadaver had been used for medical research by a doctor who had lived in the house thirty years before.

One must, however, bow to a superior critic who asserts that folklore a la Jones is fun, and decide that *Spooks of the Valley* is a contribution to the juvenile field.

Aili K. Johnson

Flint, Michigan

Folk Song: U. S. A. Collected, adapted, and arranged by John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax; Charles Seeger and Ruth Crawford Seeger, Music Editors. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948 (copyright, 1947). xvi, 407 pp. \$6.00; textbook edition \$4.50.

Unlike the Lomaxes' other published collections, *Folk Song: U. S. A.* is a frankly commercial song book, addressed to the public which has recently bought more than a hundred thousand copies of Margaret Bradford Boni's *Fireside Book of Folksongs*. The present volume is therefore large and attractively printed, with a good deal of commentary more often ingratiating than informative. Its contents are described as "the 111 best American ballads," a delightful publisher's fiction which will scarcely bear inspection. The editors more modestly describe the contents as "our favorites," judged by their "beauty, variety, strength, and singability," and an atmosphere of personal warmth and enthusiasm has obviously animated the shrewd choice of contents and the generally amiable commentary.

The volume is more carefully conceived than its recent competitors. When compared with the more handsome Boni volume or the Downes-Siegmeyer *Treasury of American Folk Song*, the essential differences are distinctly in the Lomaxes' favor. The piano arrangements are superior because they are less pretentious; guitar chords are a useful addition. *Folk Song: U. S. A.* is more generous in printing a large number of stanzas. And the apparatus is as systematic as one could expect to find in a work aimed at the general public. Beside introductions to the eleven chapters, there are headnotes to every song (more important, to be sure, for background and emotional overtones than for information of the song's history¹). The first of the three appendices carefully credits authorities consulted in the preparation of the introductory material—a practice airily neglected in most similar situations. This appendix less satisfactorily cites the sources of words and music, especially for those songs derived from the unpublished Lomax collections, but it does reveal the extent to which the editors have drawn on the repertoire of Burl Ives and the collections of Niles, Frank Warner, Cecil Sharp, Eddy, Beck and others. The second appendix is a carefully annotated bibliography of 126 books, based on the Lomax-Cowell *American Folk Song and Folk Lore, a Regional Bibliography*. The third appendix, related rather closely to the contents of *Folk Song: U. S. A.*,

¹ An important exception is the detailed factual account of the disputes over the origin and copyright ownership of "Home on the Range" and "Casey Jones."

is a useful list of 58 ballad and folksong record albums, with annotations somewhat less critical than in the second appendix.²

The range of the volume is indicated by the topical organization. The book contains 10 animal songs; 13 courting songs; 11 square dance pieces with words; 5 military and 8 nautical songs; 9 occupational and frontier pieces; 9 cowboy songs; 7 farmer ditties; 7 "lonesome whistles"; 16 songs of "heroes and hard cases"; and 16 spirituals. The book includes only songs in English. It omits all Child ballads, as well as topical broadsides (the latter, as the editors tell us, being fully represented in the recently issued *People's Song Book*). What remains is the native American tradition in all its miscellaneous directions of vitality, and the Lomaxes have made a good compromise between the hackneyed and the completely unfamiliar. Within its announced limits it is a representative collection.

The customary Lomax practice gives us a great many composite versions whose words and music are "smoothed" to make them presentable for a general audience. One recalls Percy's compilation of the *Reliques*, and Ritson's waspish wrath at the Bishop's editorial improvements. The Lomaxes, being more systematic in citing sources, are not deliberately mysterious; yet no one can tell what they have done to their own field collections without consulting their recordings in the Library of Congress Folk Song Archive.³ As a result, this book must remain a useful popular work, but nothing more. It cannot, unfortunately, have the authority of such a collection as the *Deutscher Liederhort*.

One hesitates to speak in detail of the commentary. It is of two sharply different orders, representing the divergent interests of father and son. Both editors delight in anecdote, and for the most part the Lomax prose is concerned with folkways, folk singers, or incidents associated with collecting trips. Implicit in much of the celebration of "the people" is a thesis of "democratic" determinism in folklore which, so far as I am aware, is the work of the younger Lomax. That any kind of determinism, economic or otherwise, dictates the dynamics of folk processes is, of course, highly dubious, and young Lomax should, if only out of respect for his father, keep his politics and his folklore clearly separated.

Claude M. Simpson, Jr.

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² Since record manufacturers do not keep albums in print for long, Lomax's bibliography will constantly need supplementing; its presence might, however, encourage manufacturers to consider some of their ware "standard" and therefore worth keeping in stock indefinitely.

³ Even songs in their published collections are still in flux. The interested reader may compare the versions of "The Old Chisholm Trail" in *Folk Song: U. S. A.* and in *Cowboy Songs*, pp. 29-32. The tunes are not quite identical; the order of stanzas is considerably different; and some of the profanity not found in the earlier volume is restored.

The Lawd Sayin' the Same, by Hewitt Leonard Ballowe, The Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1947. xi, 247. \$2.50.

It is gratifying to note that there are still a few white writers scattered here and there who have not lost contact with the plantation life of the American Negro, and who still regard it as excellent source material for their writings. Negro folk literature has suffered a tremendous loss recently because of the lack of interest manifested in it by talented white authors. This is due largely to the fact the personal relationship that formerly existed between master and slave, and later between plantation owner and field hand no longer exists. To find one, today, as well versed in the knowledge of Negro folk life as Dr. Ballowe is a rare occurrence. Perhaps it is his deep insight into Negro folk character and thought that makes his stories so readable. Having lived among the Negroes dwelling on the sugar cane plantations on the West banks of the Mississippi River about fifty miles below New Orleans for a long number of years, and having been closely associated with them he is well qualified to depict their mode of life.

Although the volume is very revealing, one can not agree with the writer of the introduction and the publishers that, "The Lawd Sayin' the Same" is a book of folk tales—that its contents adhere strictly to the accepted standards of folk literature. I have had the privilege of reviewing several volumes concerning Louisiana Negro folk life and all of them have been labeled *Negro Folk Tales*. None of them, however, deserve to be placed in this category. Traditional folklore springs from the people, is of their creation and is their group property. Dr. Ballowe's stories are mostly Ballowe and tell about Negro folk life as he has observed it. The folk Negro is used as source material, but Dr. Ballowe is the talented artist and skillful story teller who always moulds these materials according to his own plan. Really, the volume takes on the aspects of a folk novel where the characters and incidents conform to a definite Negro folk pattern, but are the creations of an individual mind. It has a plot, characters that subsist throughout the entire narrative, a definite locale as a setting and clearly defined connecting links between each chapter. Dr. Ballowe's Negroes do not comment on their own existence. The doctor is the trained technician who says their say for them.

A cheerful and delightful addition to the area of Negro spirit lore and superstitions, introduced by the author, is the "Duppy". The nature and structure of this mischievous and sometimes annoying sprite is described in chapter 111 of the volume as follows:

In the beginning, in this country all of the talking animals in this country had been Duppies. Since Biblical days certain men had been able to understand what animals talked about, but in the jungle cults men and animals talked back and forth. When slaves were carried from Guinea to the Atlantic seaboard the slavers hadn't picked them; they nabbed high and low. Some of the high ones brought their Duppies with them.

Duppies were spirits in a spirit hierarchy. Humans had to be of quality to command the services of one. The procession started in Ferginny (Virginia) which was as shadowy in its boundaries as Guinea. The jungle people turned their backs upon fetish gods and their attendants, and set out for a Promised Land.

There was no place for Duppies in the procession. Outside, they were very lonely, with nothing to do. Some elected to go back to Guinea; others preferred to stay in the new country which appealed to them more than the old; so each Duppy looked out after himself.

Thus Dr. Ballowe explains the Duppy nature, and structure and his entrée on the American Scene. The favorite habitat of the "Duppy" seems to have been the sugar cane plantation districts of Louisiana, such as the one Dr. Ballowe describes so vividly in "The Lawd Sayin' the Same." The most interesting "Duppy Episode," to me, is the one where the Negro professor from the North comes to a Louisiana sugar cane plantation to study Negro folk life first hand, and is set upon by a "Duppy." There is much more to this incident than the Negro's being set upon by a "Duppy." This event bears striking conformity to the general pattern of white thinking in the Southland about Northern Negroes (Southern whites dislike having Northern Negroes in the South in any capacity). The literary productions of Southern whites are often used as vehicles to propagandize this attitude. In Dr. Ballowe's account of the "Duppy" assault on the Northern Negro professor, the plantation Negroes are credited with planning the attack, but one can not help thinking that it was Dr. Ballowe and Sectional tradition that maneuvered the Duppy's onslaught on the black Northerner.

Nevertheless, Dr. Ballowe's "The Lawd Sayin' the Same" is the most authentic portrayal of Negro folk life on American plantations that has made its appearance since the publication of Joel Chandler Harris' "Uncle Remus Tales." Dr. Ballowe's experiences in the Boer War in Africa coupled with the numerous years he has spent in observing and mingling with the folk Negro of Louisiana plantations cause his tales to be endowed with rich historical background and real folk flavor. What Joel Chandler Harris did for the Negro animal myths of the Georgia plantation Negro of the Slavery period, Hewitt Ballowe has done for the stark realistic tales of the Louisiana plantation Negro of the Reconstruction era. While one can trace elements of traditional Negro narrative in the works of both of these writers, neither of their contributions can be logically classified as traditional folklore. Joel Chandler Harris' "Uncle Remus" is not the product of the Negro folk mind; "Uncle Remus" is Harris' brain child. Likewise, the characters like Un'e' Brutus, Driver Green, the Old One, and others that appear and constantly reappear in Dr. Ballowe's book are inventions of the Doctor's mind rather than creations of the folk Negroes he writes about. Consequently, the works of both authors must be classified as works of High Art rather than products of Low Art. Joel Chandler Harris puts the words

in Uncle Remus' mouth, and Dr. Ballowe, not only puts words into the mouths of his characters, but describes their actions in excellent literary English.

We hope that this will not be the last volume on Negro folk expression that will come from Dr. Ballowe's pen, and that what he has done will inspire other white writers in the South to seriously consider using Negro folklore as subject matter for their literary efforts. The fact that Negroes, themselves, have failed to take advantage of the opportunity to dignify their tradition makes it more imperative than ever that white authors renew their interest in this area of American folk literature.

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